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THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AS PRESENTED
IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by
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June 1956

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SHORT TITLE

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL IN LUTH. CONF.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Immortality of the soul is a concept that "has a long and respected standing in the philosophies and religions of the world."¹ In the present study it is proposed merely to take

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This study is concerned primarily with that of the individual soul. The study of the concept of the immortality of the individual soul, or at least of survival in some form after death, seeks to ascertain the fate or condition, temporary or eternal, of individual souls, and how far the issues of the future depend on the present life. There is where immortality is borne its psychological implications.

¹ Dr. P. Wolbrock, "The Doctrine of the Last Things," *The Christian Year*, edited by F. M. Goodrich (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 153.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Immortality of the soul is a concept that "has a long and respected standing in the philosophies and religions of the world."¹ In the present study it is proposed merely to take a general view of the field that will serve to indicate the place of its eschatological implications in the general framework of religion and illustrate, by comparison, the superiority of this phase of Christian eschatological teaching. Primarily it is proposed to investigate the subject matter as it is presented in the Lutheran Confessions of the Reformation period.

As a preliminary indication of the subject matter, a distinction may be made between the immortality of the individual and that of the race and the universe at large. However, this study is concerned primarily with that of the individual soul. The study of the concept of the immortality of the individual soul, or at least of survival in some form after death, seeks to ascertain the fate or condition, temporary or eternal, of individual souls, and how far the issues of the future depend on the present life. Here is where immortality is basic to eschatological implications.

¹W. F. Wolbrecht, "The Doctrine of the Last Things," The Abiding Word, edited by Theo. Laetsch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. 553.

The procedure for this thesis will, first of all, take into consideration the careful reading of the Lutheran Confessions as presented in the Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. This reading will cover the Latin and the German originals, but will include some reference to the Concordia Triglotta which contains an English translation. The Bibliography will indicate the source materials on the Greek and pagan concepts of immortality of the soul, as well as all other sources supporting or refuting details. For purposes of gaining insight into the thinking presented in the Lutheran Confessions, it will be necessary to draw heavily on the writings of Martin Luther who greatly influenced the Confessions of the Reformers.

There will, of necessity, have to be a presentation of the general Lutheran view on immortality in an opening chapter. Subsequent chapters will investigate the Pre-Reformation Creeds, The Confessions from the pen of Luther, The Confessions from the pen of Melancthon, and, finally, The Formula of Concord of 1580.

In each chapter, the use of the terms "soul" and "immortality" will be investigated. Throughout, an attempt will be made to contrast the Greek and pagan concept with that found in the Lutheran Confessions.

The following sketch indicates the origin of the various Lutheran Confessions:

A. The Pre-Reformation Creeds.

1. The Apostles' Creed.

2. The Nicene Creed.
 3. The Athanasian Creed.
- B. Confessions from the Pen of Luther.
1. The Small Catechism.
 2. The Large Catechism.
 3. The Smalcald Articles.
- C. Confessions from the Pen of Melancthon.
1. The Augsburg Confession.
 2. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession.
 3. The Tractate (which is not proprie dictu a Confession).
- D. The Formula of Concord (1580).
1. The Epitome.
 2. The Thorough Declaration.
 3. The Catalog of Testimonies (which is not a Confession).

Throughout the thesis an attempt will be made to establish the Scriptural foundations for the soul's continued existence, determining how the Greek concept was brought over into Christian use with the establishment of a Christian connotation, and endeavoring to determine whether the Lutheran Confessions are in harmony with it.

That the reader may be clear on abbreviations, this thesis will limit itself to a very few. The letters JABS will always refer to the Anniversary Edition known as Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch--lutherischen Kirche. In every case the page and line reference will be given for accuracy. Within this thesis abbreviations for the writings of Luther will be given, for example, on the Weimar Ausgabe, with a simple WA, but the description of such abbreviations are given clearly at the beginning of JABS.

While the subject of this thesis is difficult to treat, this particular study has its importance and gives great satisfaction to the writer. It is currently important, because recent deviations and trends in Lutheran theology seem to be getting dangerously close to the Greek and humanistic interpretation of the concept of the immortality of the soul. This calls for a restudy of Scripture and Lutheran theology lest subtly all other cardinal doctrines of Christian truth be undermined. It is important also, because of the constant need for eschatological awakening. It is hoped that, through this particular study, the writer and others might come to a renewed Christian evaluation of the subject at hand, and greater appreciation for the Lutheran Confessions.

...the Lutheran Church, the very same Luther himself
 says in these words: "The soul, as the Christian theologian
 understands, will be in heaven with God in the heavenly life,
 [there] after the resurrection, when there shall be the
 body, which for the soul will be gathered, will the soul
 remain and which day will be the day of the resurrection."

In order to see what Luther and the Lutheran dogmatists
 have condemned, it is necessary, to consider briefly the

Dr. W. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia
 Publishing House, 1937), p. 49.

1938, 438, 9-14.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL LUTHERAN BACKGROUND

While this study proposes to present the immortality of the soul as it is confessed in the Bekenntnisschriften of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, it seems profitable, first, to present the general theological context of this doctrine. This approach is necessary so that the clear, Scripture doctrine may be the more clearly seen, and so that the rejected conceptions may be closely defined.

Some Lutheran dogmaticians speak of immortality of the soul as "the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul" and refer to Plato, Cicero, Kant, Fichte, and others, who use it in a rationalistic and humanistic sense.¹ In writing on this subject, Luther refers to the writings of Plato and Aristotle on immortality as:

rechte heidnische Lehre, die wir nicht leiden können; denn wo diese Lehre sollt' sein, so ist Christus vergeblich gestorben, weil kein Schaden noch Sünde im Menschen ist, [darum] dafür er sterben musste, oder waere allein für den Leib, nicht für die Seele auch gestorben, weil die Seele gesund und allein der Leib des Todes ist.²

In order to see what Luther and the Lutheran dogmaticians have condemned, it is necessary, to consider briefly the

¹J. T. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1934), p. 639.

²JABS, 435, 9-16.

non-Biblical conceptions of the continued existence of the soul after death. John Baillie has well summarized the Greek view of the matter when he refers to the aphorism: $\Sigma \hat{\omega} \mu \alpha$ $\Sigma \hat{\eta} \mu \alpha$.³ Plato regarded the soul as being imprisoned in the body, and death as the means of liberating the soul. Rohnert has well summarized the Platonic conception of the soul's immortality, which he terms the metaphysical or ontological or pneumatological argument, when he writes:

Aller Tod ist die Aufloesung des Gegenstandes in seine einfachen Bestandteile. Die menschliche Seele aber ist immateriell, also einfach und unaufloeslich, folglich auch unzerstoerbar und ewig. (So schon Plato, Cicero, ferner M. Mendelsohn, Teichmueller u.a.)⁴

³John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1951), p. 36.

⁴W. Rohnert, Die Dogmatik (Braunschweig und Leipzig: Hellmuth Wollermann, c.1902), p. 567. Rohnert also summarizes most other non-Christian views. He writes: "2. Der teleologische: Die unendlichen Anlagen des menschlichen Geistes werden im irdischen Leben niemals befriedigend entwickelt; es muss mithin seine Bestimmung ueber das Diesseits hinausreichen, seiner Fortbildung darf durch den Tod keine Schranke gesetzt werden. 3. Der analogische: In der Natur, besonders in der Pflanzenwelt, giebt es keine absolute Vernichtung, sondern ueberall entwickelt sich aus dem Tode neues Leben. Aehnlich wird es mit dem Menschen sein. (So schon viele der alten Kirchenvaeter, aber auch neuere Theologen). 4. Der moralische: Im Menschen wohnt das gleiche Streben nach Tugend und Glueck, nach Sittlichkeit und Wohlsein. Da aber im irdischen Leben dies Verlangen niemals vollkommen befriedigt wird, da ferner die Sittlichkeit oft die Aufopferung des zeitlichen Wohlseins fordert, so muss es ein kuenftiges Leben geben, wo eine Ausgleichung zwischen Tugend und Wohlsein stattfindet, und das Gute seine Vergeltung empfaengt (Kant). Ohne diese Aussicht auf ein ewiges Leben koennte z.B. eine Aufopferung des Lebens zur Rettung anderer niemals zur Pflicht gemacht werden. Das Sittengesetz wuerde ja vom Menschen dessen eigene Vernichtung fordern, wenn der Tod in das Nichts fuehrte. 5. Der theologische: Es waere mit Gottes Weisheit, Guete und Gerechtigkeit unvereinbar, wenn Gott den Menschen, den er mit so hohen Anlagen und mit einer so tiefen Sehnsucht nach Fortdauer

The Lutheran Cyclopedia defines the immortality of the soul thus:

The vital principle in man, whereby he perceives, reasons, and learns. The rational soul is simple and immaterial (not composed of matter and form). All languages apparently distinguish between soul and spirit. However, psychologists by no means agree in their definitions of the two; some give to the spirit the higher potency, others, to the soul. From mind, soul is commonly distinguished by referring mind to the various powers which the soul possesses. Spirit, when considered separately, may signify the principle of life; mind, the principle of intelligence; whereas the soul always refers to the essential nature, the essence of man's being.⁵

This brief definition is helpful to our purpose. Since the Bekennnisschriften are based on the Scriptures in Lutheran theology, and the Scriptures associate immortality of the soul with eschatological concepts such as judgment, hell, heaven and others, it will be well, at this point, to draw from the Scriptures the teaching on the soul's continued existence after death.

ausgestattet hat, nicht auch Unsterblichkeit sollte verliehen haben. Sonst wuerden ja Gottes Absichten, mit welcher er persoenliche Geschoeepfe ins Dasein gerufen, nicht zur vollen Realisierung kommen. 6. Der kosmische: Wie die Gestirne mit einander in plupischer Verbindung stehen, so laeszt sich auch eine moralische Verbindung ihrer Bewohner erwarten, die sich aber erst in einem jenseitigen Leben vollziehen kann. 7. Der historische: Abgesehen davon, das Geistererscheinungen, sonnambule Visionen und mancherlei Erfahrung auf dem Gebiet der Nekromantie, des Spiritismus ein Fortleben nach dem Tode bezeugen, haben fast alle Voelker aller Zeiten diese Hoffnung, oder doch eine Ahnung von einem Fortleben, --ein Beweis, dass der Unsterblichkeitsglaube in der Natur des menschen Geistes begruendet ist. Auch wird diese Hoffnung durch das Zeugnis der Weisen aller Zeiten unterstuetzt" (pp. 567f.). The Christian rejects all these worthless arguments in favor of the promise of God which He gives in His all-pure and holy Word.

⁵The Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1954), p. 997.

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In Psalm 89:48, the Holy Ghost asks: "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?" With this question, the Holy Ghost reveals the mortality of all men. That all men are mortal is an incontrovertible truth, attested by the death of generations of men. This passage, however, does not set forth the cause of death. In rejecting false conceptions, Dr. Pieper well writes:

Die Ursache des Todes ist nicht etwa in einer urspruenglichen Beschaffenheit der menschlichen Natur zu suchen, wie nicht nur von Heiden (Seneca: Morieris ista hominis natura, non poena est), sondern auch innerhalb der aeusseren Christenheit behauptet worden ist.⁶

Roehmert agrees with Dr. Pieper and writes that "der Tod ist also nicht urspruenglich von Gott gewollt und geordnet, ist eigentlich keine Naturnotwendigkeit."⁷

What has so far been written clearly indicates what death is not. It remains, therefore, to consider positively what death is. In his excellent Compendium, Hutter writes:

Mors corporis nihil aliud est, quam dissolutio unionis naturalis, qua corpus ab anima separatur. Ex d. Hoerbrando, et D. Hunnio hic articulus est collectus.⁸

⁶Franz Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1920), III, 569. The accuracy of Dr. Pieper's observation is partly documented by himself. To document the second part, viz., a pagan view of a "Christian" theologian, one example will suffice. Dr. Weatherhead writes: "Death is the ordinance of God. Not an untimely death, but death at some time or another is the will of God." Leslie Weatherhead, Why Do Men Suffer? (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1936), p. 214.

⁷Roehmert, op. cit., p. 565.

⁸Leonard Hutter, Compendium Locorum Theologicorum Ex. Script. Et Libr. Concordiae, 3rd corrected edition by Daniel F. Janus (Lipsiae: Sumt. Caroli Ludovici Jacobi, 1747), p. 638.

After thus describing death, Hutter states:

Causa primaria est peccatum. Genes. II, 17. Rom. VI, 23.
Per unum hominem peccatum in mundum intravit, et per
peccatum mors.⁹

Dr. Pieper summarizes the matter, when he writes:

Die Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments kennt keine andere
Todesursache also die Suende des Menschen. . . . Die
Schrift kennt nur den Tod, der ein Gericht ueber die
Suende ist.¹⁰

It is seen, then, that the cause of death is sin. Death is
defined as the separation of soul and body. }

Thanks to God's abundant grace and mercy because of
Christ, death is not His last word to man. Dr. Luther writes:

Also haben wir den Trost: Wir leben oder sterben, so sind
wir des Herrn; wir seien im leben oder komen in den tod,
ja in die hellen (dass auch Christus bei uns ist).¹¹

⁹Ibid. The famous dogmatician, Quenstedt, agrees, generally, with Hutter, and writes: "Mors proprie accepta significat animae a corpore separationem, & vitae animalis privationem, cui ordinario omnes tam boni, quam mali sunt subjecti, & haec significatio est hujus loci." Johannes Andreas Quenstedt, Theologia Didactico--Polemica, sine Systema Theologicum, in Duas Sectiones, Didacticam et Polemicam, Divisum (Wittebergae: n.p., 1691), p. 535. And again, Quenstedt writes two pages farther on: "Forma mortis est animae a Corpore solutio & separatio τὸ π. κ. γ. seu localis, Luc. XII. 20. XXIII. 43. . . . Finis mortis in se spectatae est poena peccati: at respectu diversorum objectorum consideratae finis est, vel paterna castigatio & ad meliorem vitam translatio, ut in piis, vel mors aeterna ac infernalis, ut in impiis. . . . Definitio mortis in se consideratae haec est: Mors est privatio per lapsum primorum parentum loco poena introducta, animae et corporis unionem solvens."

¹⁰Pieper, op. cit., p. 570. Rohmert agrees and quotes:
"Der Tod ist der Suenden Sold." Rohmert, op. cit., p. 565.

¹¹WA TR 2, 1830, 231.

To this word of hope, Dr. Luther adds:

Wir sollten uns fuer dem Tode nicht so sehr fuerchten,
weil wir das Wort des Lebens und den Herrn desselbigen
haelten ergriffen, der uns zu Gut den Tod überwunden hat.¹²

Christ has indeed overcome death and converted it to our good,
therefore, Hutter can write:

Cum mors malorum omnium sit terribilissimum; quod, quaeso,
solatium ipsius terroribus pii possunt opponere? Pii,
sive [sic.] credentes in Christum, sciunt, mortem sibi non
esse mortem; sed ianuam, sive [sic.] transitum ad vitam.
Io. V, 24. Amen, amen, dico vobis, qui verbum meum audit,
et credit ei, qui misit me, habet vitam aeternam, et in
iudicium non venit, sed transit a morte in vitam.¹³

Thus, the Christian, because of Christ's work, has the sure
hope of a life that has no termination.¹⁴

It is desirable to inquire more fully into the fate of
the soul after death. Rohmert writes:

Vom Eintritt des Todes an bis zur Wiederkunft des Herrn be-
finden sich die Seelen der Verstorbenen in einem Zwischenzu-
stande (status intermedius), in welchem die Glaebigen be-
halten werden zur Seligkeit, die Unglaebigen aber zum
Gericht.¹⁵

¹²Ibid., 4, 4313, 214.

¹³Hutter, op. cit., p. 642.

¹⁴The comment of Rohmert is very much in order here. He
writes: "Der bibelglaebige Christ gruendet aber seinen Glauben
an ein Fortleben nach dem Tode nicht auf die truegliche
Menschenvernunft, sondern auf das untruegliche Gotteswort Alten
und Neuen Testamentes." Rohmert, op. cit., p. 568. Cf. also:
Gn. 26:24; 28:13; Ex. 3:6; Mt. 22:31, 32; Jn. 11:25, 26; I Cor.
15:20-22. It is, indeed, true that the Old Testament presents
the doctrine of the soul's immortality behind a veil, there-
fore, Rohmert writes: "Das Neue Testament stellt die Lehre von
der Unsterblichkeit der Seele in ein noch helleres Licht. Hier
ist es vor allem der Sohn Gottes selbst, welcher, aus des Vaters
Schosz kommend (Johs. 1, 18), ueber das Jenseits sicher Kunde
geben kann und auch, soviel uns davon zu wissen not ist,
gebracht hat." Rohmert, op. cit., p. 569.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 573.

Rohnert speaks of the status intermedius of the soul in the above passage while Hutter supplies the basis for Rohnert's contention when he asks:

Anne animae una cum corporibus existinguuntur? Non existinguuntur, sed sunt spiritus immortales, qui, postquam ex hoc mortali corpore discesserint, vere manent superstites, Eccles. XII, 7. Sap. III, 1. Animae iustorum in manu Dei sunt, et non tanget illas tormentum Matth. X, 28. Nolite timere eos, qui occidunt corpus; animam autem non possunt occidere; sed potius timete eum, qui potest et animam et corpus perdere in gehenna. Matth. XXII, 32. Deus est Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, Deus Iacob. Non est autem Deus mortuorum, sed viventium.¹⁶

Since Hutter clearly establishes his opinions on the Word of God, they are firmly founded. From this clear truth of God's Word, Hutter proceeds to inquire more specifically into the nature of the status intermedius. He declares:

Piorum, siue in Christum credentium, animae sunt in manu Dei, exspectantes ibi gloriosam corporis resurrectionem, et plenam aeternae beatitudinis fruitionem, Sap. III, 1. Luc. XVI, 22.25. Anima Lazari portatur in sinum Abrahae, et solatio ibi fruatur. Impiorum autem, siue incredulorum animae sunt in loco tormentorum, exspectantes ibi cum terrore et cruciatio ignominiosam corporis resurrectionem, et perfectum aeternae damnationis sensum. Luc. XVI, 22. Mortuus est et dives, et in inferno et in tormentis est, et cruciatur. Et versu 28. est in loco tormentorum.¹⁷

¹⁶Hutter, op. cit., pp. 642-644.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 644. In connection with this point, Dr. Pieper also elucidates a very helpful clarification, when he writes: "Mit dem Tode wird die Seele des Gläubigen von den letzten Schlacken des ihr noch anhängenden erbsündlichen Vorderbens gereinigt. Der Schriftbeweis hierfür liegt in dem Ausdruck 'im Paradies.' Das Paradies ist der Aufenthaltsort des sündlosen Menschen. Wenn nun von der gläubigen Seele nach ihrer Trennung vom Leibe gesagt ist, dass sie im Paradiese weilt, so ist damit ihre Sündlosigkeit ausgesprochen." Pieper, op. cit., p. 577.

It has been clearly established that the soul does not cease to exist at death, but continues to live "in God's Hand." There is, however, some disagreement among theologians on the self-consciousness of the soul during the status intermedius. Rohmert maintains:

Dass die abgeschiedenen Seelen mit vollem Selbstbewusstsein fortleben, bezeugen uns u. a. I Sam. 28,12ff. (Samuel wiederholt dort seine fruehere Gerichtsverkuendigung an Saul und fuegt neue hinzu); Luk. 16,27f. (der reiche Mann in der Hoelle gedenkt seiner unglaeubigen Brueder und bittet fuer sie); Off. 6,9ff. (die Maertyrer erinnern sich ihrer einstigen Leiden und bitten, dass sie Gott raechen); Matth. 27,52f. (die bei Christi Tode auferstandenen Heiligen erscheinen vielen in der Stadt); Off. 4,10; 5,8ff. (die 24 Aeltesten fallen vor dem Herrn anbetend nieder und lobpreisen ihn); Hebr. 12,22-23 (die Geister der vollendeten Gerechten bilden mit den Engeln die himmlische Gemeinde); vergl. Off. 14,10-11; Jes. 14,9; Hes. 32,21 (auch die Unseligen befinden sich nicht in einem bewusztlosen Zustande).¹⁸

In order to avoid confusion, it is necessary to state here that which is shown in Chapter V, viz., this statement of Rohmert, in the light of what Luther writes, must be qualified. At this point, it is sufficient to indicate that Luther contradicts Rohmert. The details will be set forth in due time.

This brief survey has set forth the major concerns directly related to the concept of the soul's immortality. Before

¹⁸Rohmert, op. cit., p. 575. He also adds: "Wohl bezeichnet die Schrift den Tod sehr oft als einen Schlaf, als ein Ruhen ($\Sigma\upsilon\psi$, $\kappa\omicron\iota\mu\acute{\nu}\sigma\omicron\upsilon\lambda$, vergl. 2. Sam. 7,12; Hiob 3,13; Jos. 57,2; Dan. 12,2; Matth. 27,52; 1 Kor. 15,20; 1 Thess. 4,15; Off. 14,13); aber damit will sie nicht sagen, dass die Seele, sondern der Leib schlaeft (dormire est corpus, non animarum, Tertullian, De. An. 58), dass mit dem Tode das wechselvolle, unruhige Treiben des irdischen Lebens fuer den Entschlafenen ein Ende hat, und der Fromme jetzt von aussen und innen ungestoert ist, frei von aller Suende und Anfechtung, selig beim Herrn und in ihm ruht."

proceeding to the following chapter, it will be most helpful, rapidly to summarize the points thus far established. This summary has a two-fold purpose. First, succinctly to recapitulate the argument; and secondly, to provide a convenient frame of reference which may serve as a guide for the following material.

It has been seen that the Christian conception of the immortality of the soul has nothing to do with any non-Christian conceptions of immortality. The latter are based on the quicksands of human reason, the former is based on the eternal foundation of God's Word. The Christian views death as the wages of sin. By the gracious God and Lord Jesus Christ, Death has received its death's blow, and has been converted into the door to life. At death, the soul does not cease, but the righteous souls continue to live "in God's Hand"; and the unrighteous exist in torment, awaiting with trembling the final consummation of their doom. The degree of self-consciousness of the disembodied soul is a matter that needs further investigation.

It is the purpose of this chapter to establish this as fact. To remove all doubt, therefore, a few brief references to support this point will suffice. This is important, however, since these Creeds contribute richly to the theology of the Christian doctrine of the soul's immortality.

CHAPTER III

THE PRE-REFORMATION CREEDS

In considering the immortality of the soul as presented in the Lutheran Confessions, it is most appropriate to begin a detailed study of this subject with the Ecumenical Creeds. Quite understandably, this does not imply that the Ecumenical Creeds, in the narrow sense, are from the pen of any Lutheran Confessor. On the other hand, however, these Creeds may be regarded as Lutheran Creeds in the broad sense since the faith confessed in these Creeds, by the grace of God, is the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Their presence, therefore, among the Lutheran Symbols, and their genuine acceptance, is irrefutable proof that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is not a schismatic sect, but is one with the *ἑνία, καθολικὴ, καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία*.¹

It is one thing to assert that the Evangelical Lutheran Church genuinely accepts the Ecumenical Creeds, but it is another thing to establish this as fact. To remove all doubt, therefore, a few brief references to support this point will suffice. This is important, moreover, since these Creeds contribute richly to the theology of the Christian doctrine of the soul's immortality.

¹F. J. Badcock, The History of the Creeds (Second edition; London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1938), p. 221.

Philip Melancthon expresses himself on this subject when, in the third article of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, he writes:

Tertium articulum probant adversarii, in quo confitemur duas in Christo naturas, videlicet naturam humanam, assumptam a verbo in unitatem personae suae; et quod idem Christus passus sit ac mortuus, ut reconciliaret nobis patrem; et resuscitatus, ut regnet, iustificet et sanctificet credentes etc. iuxta symbolum Apostolorum et symbolum Nicaenum.²

In the preface to a tract from the pen of Dr. Luther in 1538, entitled, "Die drei Symbola oder Bekenntnisse des Glaubens Christi, in der Kirche einträchtig gebraucht," he writes:

Wiewohl ich zuvor fast viel vom Glauben gelehrt und geschrieben, was er sei, was er thue, auch mein Bekenntniss habe lassen ausgehen [in 1528], was ich glaube und wo ich zu bleiben gedenke: und doch der Teufel immer neue Raenke wider mich sucht, habe ich zum Ueberflusz die drei Symbola, die man so nennet, oder Bekenntnisse, zusammen wollen lassen deutsch aus gehen, welche in der ganzen Kirche bisher gehalten, gelesen und gesungen sind; damit ich abermals bezeuge, dass ich's mit der rechten christlichen Kirche halte, die solche Symbola oder Bekenntnisse bis daher hat gehalten, und nicht mit der falschen ruhmredigen Kirche, die doch der rechten Kirche aergste Feindin ist und viel Abgoetterei neben solchen schoenen Bekenntnissen eingefuehrt hat.³

²JABS 158, 1-13. Cf. also: JABS 170, 30-41; 235, 13-36.

³Martin Luther, Saemmtliche Schriften, edited by Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1885), X, cc.992-94. In the preface to his "Kleiner Katechismus," Dr. Luther writes: "Aufs erst, dass der Prediger fuer allen Dingen sich huete und meide mancherlei oder anderlei Text und Form der zehen Gebot, Vaterunser, Glauben, der Sakrament etc., sondern nehme einerlei Form fuer sich, darauf er bleibe und dieselbige immer treibe, ein Jahr wie das ander; denn das junge und albern [einfaeltig] Volk muss man mit einerlei gewissen [einem bestimmten] Text und Formen lehren, sonst werden sie gar leicht irre, wenn man heut sonst [so] und ueber Jahr so lehret, als wollt' man's bessern, und wird damit alle Huete und Arbeit

The Confessors of 1580 write:

Und nachdem gleich nach der Apostel Zeit, auch noch bei ihrem Leben, falsche Lehrer und Ketzer eingerissen und wider dieselbige in der ersten Kirchen Symbola, dass ist, kurze, runde Bekenntnissen, gestellt, welche fuer den einhelligen, allgemeinen christlichen Glauben und Bekenntnis der recht-glaebigen und wahrhaftigen Kirchen gehalten, als namelich das Symbolum Apostolicum, Symbolum Nicaenum und Symbolum Athanasii: bekennen wir uns zu denselben und vorwerfen hiermit alle Ketzereien und Lehr, so denselben zuwider in die Kirche Gottes eingefuehrt worden seind.⁴

On the basis of these testimonies, it has been clearly established that all the Lutheran confessors, without exception, accept the Ecumenical Creeds as expressions of their faith. It is now possible to examine, in detail, these Creeds in order

verloren [zunichte gemacht] ." JABS 502,41-503,3. In Part I, Article IV, of the Smalcald Articles, Dr. Luther presents the teaching about Christ "wie der Apostel, item S. Athanasii Symbolon und der gemeine Kinderkatechismus lehret." Ibid., 414,25,26. It is of interest that Luther's "drei Symbola" are: the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Te Deum of SS. Ambrose and Augustine. To these is appended the Nicene Creed. Since the Te Deum is not part of the official Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, it will not be discussed in this thesis. It will be helpful, nevertheless, to note here the passages of particular interest in this study. These are: "Dich lobet die herrliche Versammlung der Apostel und der loebliche Haufe der Propheten, auch der reinen Maertyrer Schaar Du hast des Todes Stachel ueberwunden, und den Glaebigen das Himmelreich aufgethan. . . . Hilf, dass wir sammt deinen Heiligen mit der ewigen Herrlichkeit begabt werden. Hilf deinem Volk, Herr, und segne dein Erbe. Leite sie und erhebe sie ewiglich. Wir loben dich taeglich. Wir preisen deinen Namen immer und ewiglich. . . . Wir hoffen auf dich, Herr, lass uns nimmerehr zu Schanden werden." Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, X, cols. 998,999.

⁴JABS 768,8-21. They also write: " . . . bekennen wir uns zum andern zu den dreien allgemeinen Symbolis, naemlich dem Apostolischen; Nicaenischen und des heiligen Athanasii, als zu der kurzen, christlichen und in Gottes Wort gegruendeten herrlichen Bekenntnis des Glaubens." Ibid., 834,30-36; cf. also: Ibid., 826,35-45.

to determine what contributions they make to the Christian doctrine of the soul's immortality.

The first of these Creeds to be considered is commonly called the Apostles' Creed. About this Creed, Badcock writes:

The legend in its latest and fullest form is that the Twelve Apostles met together in Jerusalem before departing on their several missions, and there drew up a creed of twelve clauses to which each Apostle contributed one, and that this creed was brought by St. Peter to Rome, and thence distributed over Italy, Gaul, Spain, Africa, Sicily, and the adjacent islands by bishops consecrated by him or his successors.⁵

While it is quite obvious that the Apostles did not write the Creed bearing their names, nevertheless, the faith confessed in this Creed is truly apostolic, as Dr. Luther says:

Das erste Symbolum, der Apostel, ist zwar das allerfeinste, das kurz und richtig die Artikel des Glaubens gar fein fasset und auch den Kindern und Albernern leichtlich zu lernen ist.⁶

In a letter from Bishop Marcellus of Ancyra to Bishop Julius of Rome, in which the former defends his orthodoxy to the latter, the earliest known form of the Apostles' Creed is found. This Creed is quite similar to the textus receptus of the Apostles' Creed, except that in the latter the third article is expanded more than in the former. The present text of the Apostles' Creed is first found in a sermon by Caesarius of Arles in France, about 500 A.D.⁷

⁵Badcock, op. cit., p. 165.

⁶Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, X, col. 994.

⁷Cf. F. Bente, "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," Concordia Triglotta (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 12. See also: Willard Dow Allbeck, Studies in the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1952), pp. 17-30.

The portions of this Creed pertinent to this study are:

Second Article . . . Σταυρωθέντα, θάνατον, καὶ ταφέντα,
κατελθόντα εἰς τὰ κατώτατα, τῇ τετάρτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστάντα
ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς . . .
ἐκείθεν ἐρχόμενον κεῖναι ἡμῶν καὶ νεκρῶν.

Third Article . . . ἄρᾳ ἐκκλησιῶν, εὐαγγέλιον ἀγάπης,
ἡμῶν διώκον . 8

In considering the Apostles' Creed, this study is filled with blessings. In the first place, there is the blessing derived from the study of the Creed itself; in the second place, it is blessed by the exposition of God's servant, Martin Luther; in the third place, Dr. Luther's exposition⁹ of the Creed, forming a part of the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, is publica doctrina of that Church.

Dr. Luther bases his exposition of the Second Article of the Creed on the words: "an Jesum Christum, unsern HERRN."

He then asks what this means, and answers:

Das ist's, dasz er mich erloeset hat von Sunde, vom Teufel, vom Tode und allem Unglueck. Denn zuvor habe ich keinen Herrn noch Koenig gehabt, sondern sondern bin unter des Teufels Gewalt gefangen, zu dem Tod verdampt, in der Sunde und Blindheit verstrickt gewesen.¹⁰

⁸Bente, op. cit., p. 12.

⁹Although Dr. Luther's contributions on the concept of the soul's immortality are the subject of the following chapter, nevertheless, his treatment of the Creed belongs in this chapter. Since, moreover, Dr. Luther's views will be fully presented in the following chapter, no exhaustive analysis will be presented here.

¹⁰JABS, 651, 34-40. cf. also: 652, 25-30, 46-653, 3.

What Luther writes here, he has also written in his incomparably precious and beautiful exposition of the Second Article. These words are unsurpassed by any others and even Luther himself never transcends them. He writes:

Ich glaube, dass Jesus Christus, wahrhafter Gott vom Vater in Ewigkeit geboren und auch wahrhafter Mensch von der Jungfrauen Maria geboren, sei mein HERR, der mich verlornen und verdammten Menschen erloeset hat, erworben, gewonnen und von allen Sunden, vom Tode und von der Gewalt des Teufels nicht mit Gold oder Silber, sondern mit seinem heiligen, theuren Blut und mit seinem unschuldigen Leiden und Sterben, auf dass ich sein eigen sei und in seinem Reich unter ihm lebe und ihm diene in ewiger Gerechtigkeit, Unschuld und Seligkeit, gleichwie er ist auferstanden vom Tode, lebet und regieret in Ewigkeit; das ist gewiszlich wahr.¹¹

From this it is clear that Luther teaches what the Lord Himself said: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (Jn. 14:19). Luther bases his hope of everlasting life on Christ. It is because Christ has conquered sin, death, and hell and because He lives, that Luther believes he too shall live with Him. This passage indicates the Christological frame of reference from which Luther viewed immortality. This immortality is not guaranteed by virtue of inherent qualities resident within the soul, but is based on the vicarious and the victorious work of the Redeemer.

Luther's exposition of the Third Article of the Creed is also priceless. He writes:

Ich glaube, dass ich nicht aus eigener Vernunft noch Kraft an Jesum Christ, meinen Herrn, glauben oder zu ihm kommen kann, sondern der heilige Geist hat mich durchs Evangelion berufen, mit seinen Gaben erleuchtet, im rechten Glauben geheiligt und erhalten, gleichwie er die

¹¹Ibid., 511, 23-38.

ganze Christenheit auf Erden berueft, sammlet, erleucht, heiligt und bei Jesu Christo erhaelt im rechten einigen Glauben, in welcher Christenheit er mir und allen Glaebigen taeglich alle Sunde reichlich vergibt und am juengsten Tage mich und alle Toten auferwecken wird und mir sampt allen Glaebigen in Christo ein ewiges Leben geben wird; das ist gewiszlich wahr.¹²

In this Article, Luther considers the Holy Ghost as Sanctifier. When Luther considers how the Holy Ghost effects His sanctifying work, he writes:

Gleichwie der Sohn die Herrschaft ueberkoeumt [erwirbt], dadurch er uns gewinnet durch seine Gepurt, Sterben und Auferstehen etc., also richtet der heilige Geist die Heiligung aus durch die folgende Stuecke, das ist durch die Gemeine der Heiligen oder christliche Kirche, Vergebung der Sunden, Auferstehung des Fleische und das ewige Leben, das ist, dass er uns erstlich fuehret in seine heilige Gemeine und in der Kirchen Schosz legt, dadurch er uns predigt und zu Christo bringet.¹³

Here Luther ascribes the effective application of Christ's merits to the Holy Ghost.¹⁴ It is the peculiar office of God the Holy Ghost to take the things of Christ and make them the believer's.

Luther also explains:

¹²JABS, 511,46-512,13.

¹³Ibid., 654,6-17. Luther also teaches that the Holy Ghost accomplishes His work: "durch die christliche Kirche, Vergebung der Sunden, Auferstehung des Fleische und das ewige Leben." Ibid., 654,53-655,2.

¹⁴At this point, it is necessary to make clear that: "If at times Scripture ascribes creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Ghost, this is done by appropriation, which, however, does not exclude the divine operation of the other Persons." J. T. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1934), p. 157. Thus, in his exposition of the First Article, Luther praises the Father who has created his "Leib und Seel," but Luther does not, hereby, exclude the creative activity of the other Persons. Cf. JABS, 510,33ff.

Indes aber, weil die Heiligkeit angefangen ist und taeglich zunimmt, warten wir, dass unser Fleisch hin-gerichtet [getoetet] und mit allem Unflat bescharret [begraben] werde, aber herrlich erfurkomme und auferstehe zu ganzer und volliger Heiligkeit in einem neuen ewigen Leben. Denn itzt bleiben wir halb und halb reine und heilig, auf dass der heilig Geist immer an uns erbeite durch das Wort und taeglich Vergebung austelle bis in jenes Leben, da nicht mehr Vergebung wird sein, sondern ganz und gar rein und heilige Menschen, voller Frommkeit und Gerechtigkeit, entnommen [befreit] und ledig von Sünd, Tod und allem Unglueck in einem neuen unsterblichen und verklaerten Leib.¹⁵

This exposition, along with his others, clearly shows that Luther had no doubts about his continued existence after death. Because of the merits of Christ, and through the grace of the Holy Ghost Luther awaited "that Life, where there will be no more forgiveness, but only completely pure and holy people, full of godliness and righteousness, removed [freed] and exempt from sin, death, and all evil, in a new, immortal, and glorified body."

This detailed consideration of the Apostles' Creed also

¹⁵JABS, 659,1-16. He continues: "Wenn wir aber verwesen, wird er's ganz auf einem Augenblick [in einem Augenblick] vollfuehren und ewig dabei erhalten durch die letzten zwei. Dasz aber hie stehet 'Auferstehung des Fleisches', ist auch nicht wohl deutsch geredt. Denn wo wir 'Fleisch' hoeren, denken wir nicht weiter denn in die Scherren [Fleischlaeden]. Auf recht Deutsch aber wuerden wir also reden: 'Auferstehung des Leibs oder Leichnams' [vgl. dazu WA X, 1a,235,18-21 (Auslegung von Joh. 1,14): 'Hie soll man durchs <unter>: 'Fleisch' verstehen die ganz Menschheit, Leib und Seel nach der Schrift Gewohnheit, die den Menschen Fleisch nennet <vgl. z.B. Gen. 6,12 und Joel 3,17> . . . und im Glauben sagen wir: 'Ich glaueb die Auferstehung des Fleisches', das ist: 'aller Menschen.']. Doch liegt nicht grosze Macht sehr viel dran, so man nur die Wort recht versteht." Ibid., 659,21-31. In the following chapter, the parenthetic remarks of the Bekenntnisschriften editors will be considered in detail.

throws light on the remaining Creeds. As Dr. Luther has correctly observed that the remaining Creeds are merely expansions of the Apostles' Creed.¹⁶

The next Creed for consideration is the Nicene. Like the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed also bears an assumed name. The Creed confessed by the 318 bishops and their assistants, whom the Emperor Constantine had summoned to Nicaea in 325 A.D., is not the present Nicene Creed.¹⁷ If there is debate about the origin of the Creed which today bears that name.¹⁸ Whatever the exact origin of the present Nicene Creed, it would be more accurate to refer to it as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

¹⁶Cf. Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, X, cols. 994, 995.

¹⁷The exact origin of this Creed is greatly debated. Bente seems to support the older view that the symbol of Eusebius of Caesarea, with some modification, was adopted at Nicaea. (Cf. Bente, op. cit., p. 13.) This view, however, has been greatly revised as the result of more recent investigations. In the light of new evidence, Badcock concludes "that Antioch and Alexandria both influenced the phraseology of the Creed of the Council of Nicaea, and that it was not founded in any exclusive sense on that of Eusebius of Caesarea" (Bente, op. cit., p. 184). Badcock's view, which has much in its favor, is accepted by Allbeck. (Cf. Allbeck, op. cit., pp. 30-40.) It is also interesting to note that, as was the case with the earlier form of the Apostles' Creed, so also with the earlier form of the Nicene Creed, the Third Article experiences the greatest changes. The later form of both Creeds, in distinction from their earlier forms, presents an expanded Third Article.

¹⁸In 381 A.D., Emperor Theodosius convened the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople. The 150 bishops present determined to maintain the faith of the Nicene Fathers unchanged against those, viz., the Eunomians, Anomoeans, Arians, Eudoxians, Semi-Arians, Sabellians, Marcellians, Photinians, Apollinarians, and Macedonians, who opposed it. Up to this point, scholars are agreed. The point of departure centers on what creed received interpolation from the Nicene Creed of

The following passages from the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed are of importance for this study:

Second Article . . . σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα, καὶ ταφέντα, καὶ ἀναστάντι τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ . . . καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης καὶ κυρίας καὶ νεκρῶς· οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.

Third Article . . . καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον,¹⁹ τὸ κύριον, καὶ τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς [καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ] ἐκπορευόμενον . . . ὁμολογούμενον ἐν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν· προσδοκῶμεν [προσδοκῶ] ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν, καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος.²¹

325. Dr. Bente refers to the view of A. Harnack, who believed the Creed adopted at Constantinople to have been the baptismal confession of the Church of Jerusalem, which had been revised between 362 and 373, and amplified by the Nicene formulas and a rule of faith concerning the Holy Ghost. (Cf. Bente, *op. cit.*, p. 13.) The great English scholar, Dr. Hort, also accepted this view. Badcock, however, points out the weakness of this view. He believes the Creed of the Church of Constantinople to have been the one interpolated from the Nicene Creed of 325. This Constantinopolitan creed, according to Badcock, has affinities with creeds of Antiochene origin. (For a full discussion of the problem, see: Badcock, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-221.) Thus, as Allbeck agrees, the more correct designation of this Creed is Niceno-Constantinopolitan. (Allbeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-40.) There is one more problem in connection with this Creed. At the Synod of Toledo in 589, the controversial Filioque was added. This addition has never been accepted by the Eastern Church.

¹⁹This was all that the Third Article of the Creed of Nicaea of 325 contained.

²⁰In the Western Church, the first person plural was changed to the first person singular.

²¹With the exception of bracketed notations, this text is quoted from: Badcock, *op. cit.*, pp. 220, 221. Cf. also: Bente, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Since Luther's comments on the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed are also applicable to the Second Article of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, there is no need to discuss them again at this point.

In this Creed the Holy Ghost is referred to as "the Giver of life." Luther has such a beautiful comment on this point, that it must be quoted. Commenting on Genesis 1:2, he writes:

Der Vater schafft durch den Sohn, welchen Moses ein Wort nennet, Himmel und Erde aus Nichts; ueber dieses Werk setzt sich der Heilige Geist. Denn gleichwie eine Henne ueber den Eiern sitzt, dieselben waermet und durch die Waerme lebendig macht und darause Kuechlein zeuget: so, sagt die Schrift, dass sich der Heilige Geist gleichsam ueber das Wasser gesenkt und gesetzt habe, dass er die Dinge, so zu beleben und zu schmoecken waren, lebendig machte. Denn des Heiligen Geistes Amt ist, lebendig machen.²²

This office of the Holy Ghost, moreover, as Luther has also said, includes the hope of "resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming world."

There is also a significant relationship in this Creed, as well as in the Apostles' Creed, between "forgiveness of sins" and "resurrection." "No one has explained this relationship better than Luther. Writing on the Holy Eucharist, Luther considers the benefit of sacramental eating and drinking. He explains this benefit, when he writes:

Das zeigen uns diese Wort: "fur Euch gegeben" und "vergossen zur Vergebung der Sunden," naemlich, dass uns im Sakrament Vergebung der Sunde, Leben und Seligkeit durch solche Wort gegeben wird; denn wo Vergebung der

²²Martin Luther, Saemmtliche Schriften, edited by Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881), I, col. 12.

Sunde ist, da ist auch Leben und Seligkeit.²³ With respect to this Creed, at this time, this is all that need be noted.

The designation of the third Ecumenical Creed is even more misleading than was the case with the others. Not only was this Creed not written by Athanasius, but, what is more, it is not even a creed. Badecock states:

Of the so-called Athanasian Creed two things may be said with confidence at the outset: that it was originally written in Latin, and cannot therefore be Athanasian, and that it is not a Creed.²⁴

Badecock believes the Quicumque Vult was written not earlier than the latter half of the fourth century, not later than the end of the fifth, and definitely not later than the sixth

²³JABS, 520, 24-30.

²⁴Badecock, *op. cit.*, p. 226. With respect to the authorship of this document, Badecock's view is worth quoting. He argues: "The anonymity of the Quicumque Vult tells in favor of its Ambrosian authorship. Nearly all the hymns assigned to Ambrose are anonymous, and they are attributed to him: (1) because they correspond in style and matter with writings known to be his; (2) because they appear to have been in early use in Milan; (3) in a few instances because they are attributed to writers approximately contemporary to whom they clearly do not belong. The Quicumque Vult fulfils all these conditions. It resembles the known works of Ambrose in style and phraseology; it deals with precisely the heresies which he combated; its use at Milan is probably at least as early as, and independent of, its use in Gaul; it is ascribed in the Canon of Autun to Athanasius. Finally it is a hymn intended for antiphonal singing, and the practice of antiphonal singing was introduced at Milan by Ambrose from the East, the list of canticles sung at Milan closely resembling that of Remesiana and Constantinople; the Cursus Leoninus in which the Quicumque Vult is written was probably an Eastern importation; and certain phrases seem to go back to the letter of the Council of Constantinople in 382, which was addressed, among others, to Ambrose." *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 239.

century.²⁵ He also maintains that the earliest and only proper title of the Quicumque Vult²⁶ is Fides Catholica.²⁷ This last title certainly has much to commend itself.

The passages from the Fides Catholica of importance to this study are:

Quicumque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est, ut teneat catholicam fidem, quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit, absque dubio in aeternum peribit. . . . Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de trinitate sentiat. Sed necessarium est ad aeternam salutem, ut incarnationem quoque Domini nostri Jesu Christi fideliter credat. . . . Nam sicut anima rationabilis et caro unus est homo, ita Deus et homo unus est Christus. Qui passus est pro salute nostra, descendit ad inferos, surrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram patris, inde venturus iudicare vivos et mortuos, ad cuius adventum omnes homines resurgere habent cum corporibus suis et reddituri sunt de factis propriis rationem: Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam aeternam, qui mala, in ignem aeternum. Haec est fides catholica, quam nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque, crediderit, salvus esse non poterit.²⁸

It is not necessary to consider the material which the Fides has in common with the other Creeds; therefore, only the distinctive contributions of the Fides will be considered.

²⁵Ibid., p. 227. With respect to the use of the Quicumque Vult, Badcock quotes Dom Morin, who writes: "A mon avis le Quicumque est tout simplement une sorte de catéchisme élémentaire, destiné à mettre à la portée des esprits même les moins cultivés les formules dogmatiques . . . touchant la Trinité et l'Incarnation: le tout avec un certain sens pratique, qui ne s'accuse pas au même degré dans la plupart des anciennes professions de foi." Ibid., p. 226.

²⁶There appears to be a difference about the spelling of the first word of the Fides. Badcock and others seem to prefer Quicumque, while the editors of the Bekenntnisschriften use Quicumque, on which they make no comment.

²⁷Badcock, op. cit., p. 239.

²⁸JABS, 28,5-9; 29,33-37; 30,10-29.

The Fides begins with a damatory clause. The significance of this beginning is two-fold. In the first place, such a beginning emphasizes the importance and the seriousness of what is to follow; and in the second place, the threat of perishing everlastingly implies and involves the hope of living forever. This latter implication reaches explicit expression in sections 26 and 27.

The analogy used in section 35 is extremely important, especially when considered in connection with section 38. "The reasonable soul and flesh is one man," and "all men shall rise again with their bodies." This seems to involve a dichotomistic view of man, but this is more apparent than real. By virtue of the personal union, God and man is one Christ. If either one be removed, there is no more Christ, but only God or man. This is also true with respect to man. Man is the natural union of soul and body. When, as a result of sin, death severs this natural union, there is no more man, but only soul and lifeless body. The soul returns to God who gave it, and the fleshly body returns to the earth from which it was created by God. In the resurrection, God again creates this natural union of soul and body of flesh, and "men shall rise again with their bodies."

Before proceeding to the next chapter, a brief summary at this point may be helpful.

The Pre-Reformation Creeds base man's hope of everlasting life, or Christian immortality, on the Person and the work of Jesus Christ. He has overcome man's enemies, which bring on

death, and He has won the victory. The all-gracious Holy Ghost, in mercy and with power, takes Christ's victory and makes it the Christian's victory. As the work of creation, so also the work of redemption and of sanctification, are the work of the one and only true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

... soul's immortality. In the preceding chapter, it was found profitable to present Luther's teaching based on the Summa. It will, therefore, not be necessary to repeat the rest of the material already given together. For this chapter it will be necessary to gather Luther's teaching on the subject from his general writings. When this has been completed, it will be very simple to make a study of Luther's confessional writings in the Book of Concord. These are, the Large and Small Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles. From Luther's writings and from his confessional writings one may gain an adequate and accurate understanding of his position on the immortality of the soul.

Many prefer to believe that Luther never operated with such a pagan concept as the immortality of the soul. This is only partially true. It will presently be seen that Luther does not shrink from the term "immortality of the soul." This expression is used by Luther, but never in its pagan connotation. Luther's use was always within the Christian context. For example, in his Genetic Commentary, Luther explains that those who operate solely on the basis of human reason teach "those

CHAPTER IV

CONFESSIONS FROM THE PEN OF LUTHER

The specific purpose of this chapter is to investigate the contribution of Martin Luther to the understanding of the soul's immortality. In the preceding chapter, it was found profitable to present Luther's teaching based on the Ecumenical Creeds. It will, therefore, not be necessary to repeat the use of the material already drawn together. For this chapter it will be necessary to gather Luther's teaching on the subject from his general writings. When this has been completed, it will be very simple to make a study of Luther's confessional writings in the Bekenntnisschriften. These are, the Large and Small Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles. From Luther's writings and from his confessional writings one may gain an adequate and accurate understanding of his position on immortality of the soul.

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die Seele sterblich sei."¹

He also writes:

Hier aber erweist und erzeiget sich der Seelen Unsterblichkeit, sintemal keine Creatur, ohne allein der Mensch, des Himmels Lauf verstehen, oder die himmlischen Koerper messen und begreifen kann. Eine Sau, Kuh, oder Hund kann das Wasser, das sie trinken, nicht beurtheilen noch ermesen; ein Mensch aber beurtheilt und misset den Himmel und alle himmlischen Koerper.²

One must be very cautious in this area. Although Luther uses the expression "immortality of the soul," he does not use it in the philosophic sense. This expression, moreover, is quite infrequently used by Luther. His most frequent expressions are illustrated by the following:

Darum ist der Mensch eine Creatur, dazu geschaffen, dasz er endlich die Erde verlassen und im Himmel in einem ewigen Wesen leben soll. Denn do koemmt es her, dasz er nicht allein reden und urtheilen (welches Dialektik und Rhetorik anbetrifft), sondern dasz er auch lernen kann die ganze Lehre von des Himmels Lauf, Bewegung der Sterne, und was menschliche Vernunft mehr von den hohen und heimlichen Dingen begreifen kann.³

Here Luther doesn't distinguish between body and soul. It is man, as man, who is God's creature and who was created to live eternally with God.

Within the area of this thesis, a consideration of the status intermedius of the soul after death and before the

¹Martin Luther, Saemmtliche Schriften, edited by Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881), I, col. 5.

²Ibid., col. 55.

³Ibid., col. 56. He also writes: "Solche Gueter sind zum wehren Theil alle verloren durch die Suende und sind wir nun gleich wie ein todter Leichnam desselben ersten Menschen, behalten auch kaum einen Schatten desselben ersten Reichs und

Lord's parousia, is not an intrusion. This consideration, moreover, is necessary for at least two reasons. In the first place, Luther's views on the status intermedius will directly advance this thesis; and, secondly, this is an area in which there is much debate. Therefore, one must be clear on this point.

The first point for consideration is to determine what the soul is. As in many areas, it is easier to raise than to answer this question. Dr. Luther writes:

Wir befinden an uns, dass wir judiciren, erkennen, ermessen, zaehlen und unterscheiden koennen eines jeden Dinges Hoehe und Groesse, ja auch die geistlichen Creaturen (dass ich es also nenne), Boeses und Gutes, Recht und Unrecht; und dennoch koennen wir noch nicht sagen, was die Seele sei: wie viel weniger werden wir verstehen, was die goettliche Natur sei?⁴

Here Luther frankly confesses that he does not know what the soul is. One can, apparently, describe many characteristics

Herrschaft. Denn wie koennten wir nicht sagen, dass wir alles verloren haetten, die wir aus unsterblichen Menschen sterblich, aus Gerechten Suender, aus angenehmen und angofaelligen unangenehme, ja von Gott verworfene und verdammte Menschen worden sind? Denn jetzo sind die Menschen sterblich und Suender." Col. 89. "Die vornehmliche aber und endliche Ursache, darum der Mensch geschaffen, ist diese, davon uns die Schrift berichtet, naemlich, dass der Mensch geschaffen sei, dass er Gott gleich sein und mit ihm ewiglich leben solle. Hier aber auf dieser Erde soll er Gott loben und preisen, ihm danken und seinem Worte in Geduld gehorsam sein. Dieses Ziel ergreifen wir etlichermassen, wiewohl schwachlich, in diesem Leben, aber im zukuenftigen Leben werden wir es vollkoemmlich erreichen. Solches wissen die Philosophen nicht; darum ist die Welt am allernaerrischsten, da sie am kluogsten sein will, wenn sie die heilige Schrift oder die Theologie nicht hat. Denn die Menschen weder von ihrem Anfange noch Ende wissen, wenn sie Gottes Wort nicht haben; dass ich der andern Creaturen geschweige." Ibid., col. 160.

⁴Ibid., col. 16.

of the soul, but one still cannot say what per se the soul is. The soul cannot be weighed or measured or seen. One cannot see an atom, but what fool denies its existence? While one cannot define the soul, it remains true that the soul exists. Beyond this, finite and corrupt human reason cannot go.

In the following Luther gives a most helpful admonition-- and one which he himself never forgets:

Nun faellt hier aber noch eine andere Frage ein, naemlich: Dioweil es gewisz ist, dass die Seelen loben und im Frieden sind, was doch das fuer ein Leben oder Ruhe sein moege? Diese Frage ist aber etwas hoeher und schwerer, denn dass wir etwas Eigentliches oder Gewisses davon schlieszen koennen. Denn Gott hat nicht haben wollen, dass wir solchs in diesem Leben verstehen sollen. Darum sollen wir uns an dieser Erkenntniss und Verstand genuegen lassen, dass wir wissen, dass die Seelen nicht also vom Leibe ausfahren, dass sie in Gefahr, Qual oder Pein der Noelle kommen sollten, sondern dass ihnen eine Schlafkammer bereitet sei, darin sie im Frieden schlafen und ruhen.⁵

This passage expresses Luther's admonition with respect to the status intermedius, viz., that one cannot be dogmatic in this area, since it lies beyond human apprehension.

Luther asks:

Ob auch solche Dienste der himmlischen Koerper aufhoeren werden? Aber solches ist eine unnoethige Frage; denn jenes Leben wird ohne Zeit sein, die Frommen werden einen ewigen Tag, die Gottlosen eine ewige Nacht und Finsterniss haben a.⁶

This clearly means that the category of time, and the limitations of time, are not to be superimposed on eternity. Werner Elert also reflects Luther's view, when he asserts that for

⁵Ibid., col. 1759.

⁶Ibid., col. 53.

Luther "der 'Himmel' als Ort Gottes ist kein Ort im räumlichen Sinne."⁷ Thus the present categories of time and space do not pertain to eternity.

Luther warns:

. . . dass wir allezeit bereit und fertig sein sollten, wenn Gott anklopfe und uns von diesem Leben abforderte, dass wir geschickt waeren, einen christlichen Abscheid aus dieser Welt zu nehmen.⁸

Since not even the Christian has an absolute guarantee on life, this is a most wholesome admonition.

Luther's most frequent designation for death was sleep, as the following illustrates:

Der Schlaf ist dem Tode gleich. "Ein Mensch, der da liegt und schlaeft, ist einem Todten sehr gleich; druem haben die alten Weisen gesagt: 'Der Schlaf ist des Todes Bruder.'⁹

Unser Tod soll nur ein Schlaf sein . . . "Also sehen wir unsers Herrn Gottes Allmacht in den Creaturen; er toedtet und machet wieder lebendig. Und was ist unser Schlaf anders denn ein wahrhaeftiger Tod, und der Tod ist doch auch gleich ein Schlaf; unser Tod ist nicht anders denn wie ein Nachtschlaf. Im Schlaf verzeucht sich alle Muedigkeit frisch und gesund aufzustehen. Also werden wir aus den Graebem am juengsten Tage auch auferstehen, gleich als haetten wir nur eine Nacht geschlafen, worden

⁷Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums: Theologie und Weltanschauung des Luthertums hauptsächlich im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert (Muenchen: C. C. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1931), I, 364.

⁸WA TR I, 529, 247. In answer to the question, "What is the best death?" Dr. Luther on one occasion said: "Es ist kein besser Sterben den S. Stephani, der sagt: 'Domine Jesu, suscipe spiritum meum!' dass man alle Register hinweg lege, de peccatis et meritis nostris, und allein auf die blosze Gnade Gottes sterbe." Ibid., 117a, 45.

⁹Ibid., 1109, 554.

frisch und stark sein, die Augen nur wischen, und alsdenn werden die Maden und Wuermmer alle von uns wegfallen.¹⁰

While there can be no doubt that Luther taught that in death the soul sleeps, psychopannychism was never taught by Luther. In the following, Luther makes his rejection of psychopannychism quite clear:

Es ist aber ein Unterschied zwischen dem Schlaf und Ruhe dieses Lebens und des zukuenftigen. Denn ein Mensch, so in diesem Leben von taeglicher Arbeit muede geworden ist, geht, wenn die Nacht herbei kommt, in seine Schlafkammer als im Frieden, dass er daselbst schlafen will, und hat die Nachtruhe, und weisz gar von keinem Unglueck oder Schaden, es sei gleich mit Feuer oder Todtschlag. Die Seele aber schlaeft nicht also, sondern wacht und hat ihre Geschichte, naemlich, Gespraechte der Engel und Gottes. Darum ist der Schlaf im zukuenftigen Leben tiefer als in diesem Leben, und lebt die Seele doch vor Gott. An diesem Gleichnisz, so ich vom Schlaf eines lebendigen Menschen habe, lasse ich mir genuegen. Denn an solchem Menschen ist Friede und Ruhe, und er meint, er habe kaum eine Stunde oder zwei geschlafen, und sieht doch, dass die Seele also schlaeft, dass sie gleichwohl auch wacht.¹¹

¹⁰Ibid., 4, 4203, 203. Luther also writes: "Darum sei klug und wisse, dass Gott uns will nicht wissen lassen, wie es mit den Todten zugehe, auf dass der Glaube Raum behalte durch Gottes Wort, der da glaubt, dass Gott nach diesem Leben die Glaebigen selig macht, die Unglaebigen verdammt." Martin Luther, Saemmtliche Schriften, edited by Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), XI, col. 1207. "Wenn wir nu sterben, so ruhet der Leib im grabe, die seele in irem kemerlein, das ist, in Gottes hand, bei Christo, irem Herrn, bis wir am jungsten tage an leib und seele aufferweckt und verkleret." WA TR 5, 5356a.2, 85. "Ich lasse mir genuegen, dass ich weisz, dass in meines Vaters Hause viel Wohnungen sind, wie Christus sagt, 'sprach der liebe Mann Gottes D. Martinus.'" Ibid., 1, 1150, 568. "Wir sollten uns fuer dem Tode nicht so sehr fuerchten, weil wir das Wort des Lebens und den Herrn desselbigen haelten ergriffen, der uns zu Gut den Tod unberwunden hat." Ibid., 4, 4313, 214. "Also haben wir den trost: Wir leben oder sterben, so sind wir des Herrn; wir seien im leben oder kommen in den tod, ja in die hellen (dass auch Christus bei uns ist)." Ibid., 5, 5356a.1., 85.

¹¹Luther, Saemmtliche Schriften, I, col. 1759.

Luther also emphasizes this same point in his obituary on Urbanus Rhegius:

. . . sciamus beatum esse et habere vitam et laeticiam aeternam in societate Christi et Ecclesiae coelestis, in qua nunc ea coram discit, cernit et audit, de quibus hic in Ecclesia juxta verbum Dei disseruit.¹²

The Roman Catholic Church taught that there were five different abodes for the departed souls: (1) limbus infantum; (2) limbus patrum; (3) Purgatory; (4) heaven; (5) hell. With respect to the limbus infantum, Luther writes:

. . . die ungetauften Kinder einen solchen Kreis nicht haben. Wie es aber um sie stehe, oder was mit ihnen geschehen soll, das befohlen wir goettlicher Guete. Sie haben den Glauben und die Taufe nicht; ob sie aber Gott auf eine sonderliche Weise aufnehmen und ihnen den Glauben gebe, steht in Gottes Wort nicht geschrieben und duerfen wir darin auch nichts schliessen.¹³

This is an area in which the temptation to go beyond Scripture is very great. One is inclined to give the grieving parents of a dead, unbaptized child the positive assurance that their child is with God; however, "es steht nicht so geschrieben." Once again, Luther demonstrates his resolution to remain with the Word and not to speculate.

¹²WA 53, 400. Paul Althaus also discusses this passage. Reluctantly he admits that: "Im Blicke auf Luthers Grundgedanken ueberraschen dann Stellen, an denen er offenbar doch von einer Seligkeit der im Glauben Gestorbenen vor dem juengsten Tage bei Christo im Himmel weisz." He then discusses Rhegius' obituary and asks: "Oder ist hier Luther, gemaesz seinen Gedanken von der Ewigkeit, der juengste Tag schon als gegenwaertig gedacht?" Paul Althaus, Die letzten Dinge (Fuenfte verbesserte Auflage; Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, c.1922), p. 148. In the light of the evidence presented from Luther's Genesis Commentary (see: note 11. with the material in the text), Althaus' question must receive a negative answer.

¹³Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, I, col. 1762.

Purgatory is supposed to be the place where souls of believers go who have not made adequate satisfaction for actual sin during their lives. Luther writes:

Und sind sonderlich das eitel Luegen mit dem Fegfeuer; denn dasselbe ist auf eitel gottlos Wesen und Unglauben gegruendet. Denn sie verleugnen die Lehre, dass der Glaube selig mache, und setzten die Genugthuung fuer die Suende als die Ursache der Seligkeit. Wer derhalben im Fegfeuer ist, der ist in der Hecle selbst; denn er denkt also: Ich bin ein armer Suender und soll fuer meine Suende genug thun; darum will ich ein Testament machen. Ich will eine gewisse Summe Geld geben zum Bau der Kirchen, dass ich damit das Gebet und Opfer der Moenche und Pfaffen fuer die Todten loesen moege. Solche Leute sterben im Glauben auf ihre guten Werke und wissen von Christo nichts, ja, sie sind ihm feind. Wir aber sterben im Glauben an Christum, welcher fuer unsere Suende gestorben ist und fuer uns genug gethan hat: der ist mein Schoosz, mein Paradies, mein Trost und meine Hoffnung.¹⁴

It is small wonder that Luther rejected the devilish doctrine of Purgatory, since this doctrine denies the heart of Christian faith. Instead of trusting the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of Purgatory teaches people to rely on their ability and their own good works.

The limbus patrum was taught to have been the abode where the souls of the faithful departed of the Old Covenant were supposed to have gone. In opposition to this teaching, Luther maintains:

Von dem limbus oder Kreis der Voeter haben sie [die Papisten] nicht eigentlich geredet; sie sollten es lieber den Schoosz Abrahams genannt haben, das waere besser gewesen. Denn die vor der Zukunft Christi gestorben sind, die sind erhalten und selig geworden in der Verheissung des Wortes, darin sie in diesem Leben gelebt haben; und da sie gestorben sind, sind sie auch in das Leben gegangen und recht lebendig gewesen. Dies ist aber der Verstand

der Worte Christi, so er zum Schaecher am Kreuz geredet hat, Luc. 23,43: "Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein", das ist, in meinem Schoosz: wo ich bin, da sollst du zugleich auch sein: daselbst ist Himmel und Paradies eben Ein Ding, ausser dass noch bei den Heiligen Ruhe und Friede ist und das Reich noch nicht. Christus ist im Himmel oder im Paradies, dass er seine Kirche regiere, richte und fuchre, seine Engel sende der Kirche zu dienen, Gaben unter die Menschen austheile, die Elend und Niedrigen erhoche a. Denn er wirkt allezeit, ruht nicht, wie die Heiligen thun, die da schlafen, von welchem Jes. 63,16 gesagt wird: "Abraham weiss von uns nicht, und Israel kennet uns nicht." Derhalben ist ein grosser Unterschied zwischen den Heiligen, die da schlafen, und Christo, der da herrscht und regiert: sie schlafen, oder wissen nicht, was da geschieht, und ruhen doch gleichwohl.¹⁵

¹⁵Ibid., cols. 1762, 1763. On this same subject, Luther also writes: "Was sollen wir aber sagen zu dem Spruch im Neuen Testament Luc. 23,43: 'Heute sollst du bei mir sein im Paradies'; und 2 Cor. 12,4: 'Er ward entzuecket in das Paradies'? Ich zwar wollte ungezweifelt bekennen und sagen, dass Christus mit dem Schaecher an keinen leiblichen Ort gekommen sei. Denn von Paulo ist die Sache schon klar, nachdem er sagt, er wisse nicht, ob er in dem Leibe, oder ausser dem Leibe gewesen sei. Darum ist das meine Meinung, dass das Paradies an beiden Orten heisse das Wesen, darin Adam vor dem Fall gewesen ist, voll alles Friedens, Ruhe, Sicherheit und aller Gnade und Gaben, die da sind, wo keine Suende ist. Als wollte Christus sagen: du wirst mit mir im Paradiese sein, das ist, wirst frei und sicher von der Suende und Tod sein. Ohne allein, dass man des jungsten Tages erwarten muss, an welchem solches alles wird offenbart werden; wie denn Adam im Paradiese von Suende, Tod und aller Maledelung frei und sicher war, und doch in Hoffnung eines kuenftigen, ewigen und geistlichen Lebens lebte. Dass es also gleichsam ein allegorisch Paradies sei, wie auch die Schrift allegorisch nennet den Schoosz Abrahams nicht Abrahams Mantel, sondern das Leben, welches da ist in denen, die im Glauben entschlafen sind. Denn sie haben Friede, ruhen und warten in derselbigen Ruhe des kuenftigen Lebens und Herrlichkeit." Ibid., col. 108. "Was der Schoosz Abrahams sei? sintemal es nicht ein leiblichen Schoosz sein kann. Hierauf zu antworten, ist zu wissen, dass des Menschen Seele oder Geist keine Ruhe oder Statt hat, das er moege bleiben, denn das Wort Gottes, bis dass er am jungsten Tage zur hellen Beschauung Gottes komme. [It may be that it is upon this very passage, or one similar to it, that Werner Elert bases his views on the status intermedius. Elert's view will be discussed later in this chapter, and while it will be noted that he opposes or contradicts Luther on

This passage is extremely significant. It seems to imply that Luther was a psychopannychist. This, however, is more apparent than real. Luther taught that at times the soul sleeps and at times, in its sleep, the soul is awake. This is a paradox that Luther never attempted to resolve.¹⁶

Concerning the abode and condition of the damned, Luther writes:

certain points, it is fair here to make the note that he has apparent support from Luther for his view on this point. Darum halten wir den Schoosz Abrahams nichts anders, denn das Wort Gottes, da dem Abraham Christus verheissen word 1 Mos. 22,18, naemlich: 'Durch deinen Samen sollen alle Voelker gesegnet werden.' In diesen Worten ist Christus ihm zugesagt, als durch den jedermann gesegnet, das ist, von Suende, Tod und Hoelle erloeset werden soll, und sonst durch niemand, noch durch keine Werke. Alle, die nun an diesen Spruch geglaubt haben, die haben an Christum geglaubt und sind rechte Christen gewesen, und sind also durch den Glauben an dies Wort von Suenden, Tod und Hoelle erloeset. Also sind alle Vaeter vor Christi Geburt in den Schoosz Abrahams gefahren, das ist, sie sind im Sterben mit festem Glauben an diesem Spruch Gottes blieben, und in dasselbige Wort entschlaffen, gefasst und bewahret als in einem Schoosz, und schlafen auch noch darin bis an den juengsten Tag; ausgenommen die, so mit Christo schon sind auferstanden, wie Matthaeus Cap. 27,52 schreibt, wo sie also geblieben sind. Gleichwie auch wir, wenn wir sterben, uns erwegen und ergeben muessen mit starkem Glauben in das Wort Christi, da er sagt Joh. 11,26: 'Wer an mich glaubet, der wird nimmermehr sterben', oder desgleichen; und also darauf sterben, entschlaffen, und in Christi Schoosz gefasst und bewahret werden bis an den juengsten Tag. Denn es ist eben dasselbige Wort, das zu Abraham und zu uns gesagt ist; alle beide sagen sie von Christo, dass wir durch den muessen selig werden. Jenes aber heisst Abrahams Schoosz darum, das es zu Abraham am ersten gesagt ward und an ihm anfang.' Ibid., XI cols. 1203, 1204.

¹⁶The judgment of Koestlin is accurate. He writes: "Zugleich erklarte er [viz., Luther] jedoch vom Schlaf der in Christo Gestorbenen, dass derselbe eine ganz sanfte und suesze Ruhe sein werde, nimmt bei den Schlafenden also doch ein gewisses Gefuehl ihres Zustands an." Julius Koestlin, Luthers Theologie (Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1901), II, 341.

Wenn aber die Gottlosen sterben, sie moegen vor der Zukunft Christi abgeschieden sein, oder noch heutiges Tages, da nun Christus gekommen ist, abscheiden, gehen sie einfach in die ewige Verdammnisz. Ob aber die Verdammnisz alsbald nach dem Tode anfangt, koennen wir nicht wissen, weil geschrieben steht Roem. 14,10, dass wir alle vor dem Richterstuhl Christi sollen dargestellt werden; und die da Gutes gethan haben, werden hervor gehen zur Auferstehung des Lebens, die aber Uebels gethan haben, zur Auferstehung des Gerichts.¹⁷

Thus Luther does not insist that the agonies of the damned begin at death. Whether they do or not, he mentions clearly that "we cannot know."

Paul Althaus contends:

So geht bei Luther die ganze Spannung und Freude der Hoffnung allein auf den juengsten Tag, auf die Auferweckung durch Christus, mit der er "aus dem Tode reist." Luther troestet nicht mit dem Hinweise auf einen seligen Zustand vor dem juengsten Tage, sondern allein mit dem juengsten Tage.¹⁸

The validity of this contention is established by the following words of Luther:

¹⁷Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, I, col. 1763. "Also, wiederum, kann die Hoelle an diesem Ort nicht sein die rechte Hoelle, die am juengsten Tag angehen wird. Denn des Reichen Leichnam ist ohne Zweifel nicht in die Hoelle, sondern in die Erde begraben; es muss aber ein Ort sein, da die Seele sein kann und keine Ruhe hat, derselbige kann nicht leiblich sein. Darum achten wir, diese Hoelle sei das boese Gewissen, das ohne Glauben und Gottes Wort ist, in welchem die Seele begraben ist, verfasst bis an den juengsten Tag, da der Mensch mit Leib und Seele in die rechte leibliche Hoelle wird verstoszen werden. Denn gleichwie Abrahams Schoesz Gottes Wort ist, darin die Glaebigen durch den Glauben ruhen, schlafen und Broet werden bis an den juengsten Tag: also muss je wiederum die Hoelle sein, da Gottes Wort nicht ist, darin die Unglaebigen durch den Unglauben verstoszen sind bis an den juengsten Tag. Das kann nichts anderes, denn ein leer, unglaebig, suendig, boeses Gewissen sein." Ibid., XI, col. 1204.

¹⁸Althaus, op. cit., p. 148.

Durch die Taufe aber werden wir zum Leben der Hoffnung oder vielmehr zur Hoffnung des Lebens wiedergebracht; denn das allererst ein rechtes Leben ist, dadurch wir vor Gott leben. Und ehe wir zu demselben kommen, sind wir mitten im Tode, sterben und verfaulen in der Erde wie andere Koerper, als waere nirgend kein Leben mehr. Doch haben wir, die wir an Christum glauben, diese Hoffnung, dass wir am juengsten Tage zu einem ewigen Leben wieder sollen aufgeweckt werden. . . . So leben wir auch in dieser Hoffnung, und wenn wir sterben, behalten wir um Christi willen diese Hoffnung des Lebens, auf welche uns das Wort weist, weil es uns heisst auf des Herrn Christi Verdienst und Wohltat trauen und glauben.¹⁹

Up to this point, only Luther's general writings have been considered. While the number of references could have been greatly multiplied, the essential elements in Luther's teaching have been presented. It is now possible to turn to the corpus of Luther's confessional writings in order to see what Luther includes in these. Since Luther's views on the Apostles' Creed have already been considered, they need not be repeated.²⁰

In Part II, Article II of the Smalcald Articles, Luther expresses himself with respect to Purgatory as follows:

Erstlich: das Fegfeuer. Da hat man mit Seelmessen, Vigilien, dem Siebenden, dem Dreissigsten und jaehrlichem Begaengnis, zuletzt mit der Gemeindwochen und Allersee-lontag und Seelbad ins Fegfeuer gehandelt, dass die Messe schier allein fur die Toten gebraucht ist, so Christus das Sakrament allein fur die Lebendigen gestiftet hat. Drumb ist Fegfeuer mit allem seinem Gepraenge, Gottesdienst und Gowerbe fur ein lauter Teufelsgespenst zu achten; denn es ist auch wider den Hauptartikel, dass allein Christus und nicht Menschenwerk den Seelen helfen sell, ohn dass sonst auch uns nichts von den Toten befohlen noch gepoten ist, [derhalben man es mocht wohl lassen, wenn es schon kein Irrtum noch Abgotterei waere.]²¹

¹⁹Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, I, cols. 240, 241.

²⁰Supra, p. 17.

²¹JABS, 420, 1-12. 425, 1-13.

It is not surprising that Luther takes pains to reject the doctrine of Purgatory in this Confession. The doctrine of Purgatory denies the chief article of the Christian faith, therefore, it must be anathematized.

The following reference is quite interesting and extremely valuable:

Anrufung der Heiligen ist auch der endchristlichen Miazbraeuche einer und streitet wider den ersten Hauptartikel und tilget die Erkenntnis Christi: . . . Und wiewohl die Engel im Himmel fur uns bitten (wie Christus selber auch tut), also auch die Heiligen auf Erden oder vielleicht auch [et fortassis etiam] im Himmel, so folget daraus nicht, dass wir die Engel und Heiligen anrufen, anbeten, ihnen fasten, feiren Messe halten, opfern, Kirchen, Altar, Gottesdienst stiften und anderweise mehr dienen und sie fur Nothelfer halten und allerlei Huelfe unter sie teilen und iglichem ein sonderliche zuweisen sollten, wie die Papisten lehren und tun; denn das ist Abgoetterei, und solche Ehre gehoeret Gott alleine zu; denn du kannst als ein Christ und Heilige auf Erden fur mich bitten nicht in einerlei, sondern in allen Noeten.²²

The most important words in the above quotation are: "and perhaps also." Luther does not dogmatically state that the heavenly saints pray for us; but, in harmony with his view, already considered, that one cannot be dogmatic in this area, he states that perhaps the saints in heaven pray for us.

On the basis of the above, moreover, it is clear that Luther regards those who have departed in the faith to be in heaven. In his exposition of the Seventh Petition of the Lord's Prayer, Luther explains:

Wir bitten in diesem Gebet als in der Summa, dass uns der Vater im Himmel von allerlei Ubel Leibs und Seele, Guts und Ehre erloese und zuletzt, wenn unser Stuendlin koennt,

²²Ibid., 424, 9-10; 425, 1-13.

ein seliges Ende beschere und mit Gnaden von diesem Jammertal zu sich nehme in den Himmel.²³

Before attempting to summarize Luther's views on eternal life, there is one final consideration. Werner Elert maintains:

Ist die Auferstehung Neuschöpfung, weil sie den Tod als vollstaendiges Ende der irdischen Existenz voraussetzt, so ist zu fragen, wodurch denn die persoenliche Identitaet des Auferstehenden mit dem, dessen irdische Existenz zu Ende ging, verbuergt ist. Als Antwort kann nur der Glaube dienen, dass ja trotz unseres vollstaendigen Endes etwas von uns uebrigbleibt: das Urteil Gottes ueber uns. Unser irdisches Leben wird aufgehoben. Aufgehoben aber auch im ewigen Angedenken Gottes. Wir glauben, dass er keinen vergessen wird. Diese Gewissheit ist eine bessere Buergschaft fuer jene persoenliche Identitaet als alle Theorien ueber einen "Zwischenzustand," der den zeitlichen Abstand zwischen dem Ende der irdischen Existenz und der Auferstehung ueberbruecken und also einen Faden bilden soll, an dem sich die Toten festhalten, auf dass sie im kritischen Augenblick auch zur Stelle sind. Wenn dieser Zwischenzustand in der roemischen Lehre als Purgatorium vorgestellt wird, so ist weiter kein Wort darueber zu verlieren. Diese Vorstellung scheitert an dem Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments, das von nachtraeglichen Korrekturen irdischer Entscheidungen nichts weisz. Das ist auch der Sinn der Erzählung Jesu vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus, und zwar ihr einziger. Sie lehrt, dass es nach dem Tode keine Bruecken mehr gibt weder zwischen Oben und Unten noch zwischen Diesseits und Jenseits. Aus diesem Grunde ist auch jede andere Vorstellung von einem Zwischenzustande unmoeglich.²⁴

As his summary conclusion, Dr. Elert writes:

Die Verheissung der Auferstehung, die allen gilt, auch denen, die ihr keinen Glauben schenken, verkuendigt die Macht des Schoepfers, der allem zerstoeerenden Wollen der Kreatur zum Trotz eine unzerstoerbare Moeglichkeit fuer sie bereit haelt.²⁵

There is no need to attempt a long refutation of Dr. Elert's

²³Ibid., 515, 1-8.

²⁴Werner Elert, Der Christliche Glaube: Grundlinien der lutherischen Dogmatik (Berlin: Furche--Verlag, c.1940), p. 649.

²⁵Ibid., p. 651.

view. It is to be lamented that this fine theologian has accepted such an extreme and untenable position. There can be no doubt that Elert's views are in conflict with what Luther taught, and presented in the Lutheran Confessions from his pen,²⁶ and also with God's Word.

It is now possible and desirable briefly to summarize what has been learned from Luther and his influence on the Lutheran Confessions. In order to avoid useless repetition, this summary will be given in outline form. Since Luther nowhere offers a systematic treatment of the subject at hand, it has been rather difficult to arrange his material systematically. The following outline is an attempt at a systematic arrangement of Luther's thought:

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY:

AS TAUGHT BY MARTIN LUTHER

- I. The hope of everlasting life is based on the promise of God in Christ.
- II. Luther does use the term "immortality of the soul," but never in an un-Christian sense.
- III. The interim state or status intermedius of the soul between death and the Lord's parousia.
 - A. One must not be dogmatic in this area.
 - B. The categories of time and space, applicable in this life, are not applicable in the next.

²⁶"Derhalben sollen wir glauben, dasz ein sonderlicher Ort sei der Auserwählten, da sie alle ruhen, . . . " Martin Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, edited by Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1885), II, col. 2070.

C. The realm of the dead.

1. There is no Purgatory.
2. There is no limbus infantum.
3. There is no limbus patrum.
4. "Abraham's bosom," "Adam's bosom," "Paradise," and "in God's Hand" are designations of one and the same thing.
5. The souls of believers are in God's hand.
6. The souls of the damned are in a place of torment.

D. The condition of the soul after death.

1. The believer:
 - a. He sleeps in God's hand.
 - b. His sleep is like physical sleep, but not identical with it.
 - c. He suffers no pain or torment.
 - d. He has no sin.
 - e. At times he carries on conscious activity.
2. The unbeliever:
 - a. He is in a place of torment.
 - b. This place is not identical with the "actual, physical hell."
 - c. His torment is his bad conscience.
 - d. At times he is consciously in agony.
 - e. Whether his everlasting pains begin at death or not, cannot be known.

IV. The Christian Hope.

- A. It is never directed to a glorious status intermedius.
- B. It is always directed to the Lord's parousia, the resurrection, and the palingenesis of the world.

CHAPTER V

CONFESSIONS FROM THE PEN OF MELANCHTHON

At the time the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and the Tractate were written, Luther, Melanchthon and the Wittenberg theologians saw eye to eye and were greatly influenced by Luther. Because of Luther's tremendous influence, and since the previous chapter presents Luther's theology on the soul's continued existence, it will not be necessary to draw assistance from Melanchthon's general writings. A few snatches from his "Entwuerfe zur Vorrede" ought to be sufficient. The presentation of the immortality of the soul from the Confessions which he wrote follows.

The subject of this thesis is eschatological when viewed from the Scriptural basis. Without the Biblical connotation it can hardly be said to be truly eschatological and Christian. The foundation truth of eschatology, moreover, is the involvement of the continued existence of the soul, or better said, the total person. In the context of the times in which Melanchthon lived one is impressed with an eschatological urgency both in the writings of the Wittenberg theologians, as was noted in the case of Luther, and in the purposes for which the Confessions were written. Melanchthon is most serious in setting forth reasons for the writing of the Augsburg Confession and its adoption by the Church. In the very purpose of placing responsibility where it belongs with relation to the

eternal welfare of individuals, he writes in his "Entwurfe zur Vorrede" addressing civil authority as follows:

Dann auch Ihr Mjt. Gott nichts Angenehmers noch ihr selbs Ehrlichers und Ruhmlichers zu ewigen Zeiten handeln moecht, denn wo sie ihr Macht und Gewalt zu Eroerterung dieser Sachen und Vereinigung der Christenheit gebraucht.¹

damit sie in so hohen Sachen, die Seele und Gewissen beruhrend, nicht wider Gott handelten.²

Since the abuses in the doctrine and life were of such a serious nature as to be harmful to the eternal welfare and salvation of men, Melanchthon speaks out against them as can be observed in the following:

Und kommen die Widersacher, soviel der ein wenig Verstands haben, nit in Abred stehen, das viel Heilsams und Nutzlichs zu der Seel Seligkeit in dieser Lehr begriffen sei, dasz sie selbs annehmen und zulassen. Dann daraus ist kommen, dasz die Prediger jetzund viel bedaechtiger lehren von dem Gewalt der Schluessel, uns. . . .³

To emphasize the seriousness of the life destroying evils of his day, Melanchthon indicates an important feature of a Confession for the protection of souls, when, in his "Entwurfe zur Vorrede," he places this accent:

Und ist unter andern Miszbraeuchen der furnehmst gewesen, dasz man fast in allen Schulen, Kloestern und Kirchen wenig von Hauptstucken christliches Glaubens gepredigt und gelehrt hat, sondern dem Volk viel schaedlicher Lehr furtragen von falschen Gottesdienst, dadurch die Gewissen hoch und sehr beschwert worden, und wurden menschliche Satzungen, Orden, Heiligendienst, Wallfahrten, Indulgentien und ander unnootige und untuchtige mehr und heftiger getrieben zu verderbung der Seelen, denn was das Evangelium lehret, die Gewissen zu troesten. (Fragment II⁶)

¹JARS, 40, 6-9.

²Ibid., 35, 13-15.

³Ibid., 41, 46-50.

von Melanchthons eigener Hand)⁴

In the Augsburg Confession Melanchthon follows Luther on immortality relating it to the total person, "der ganze Mensch," as stated in Article XVII "Von der Wiederkunft Christi zum Gericht":

Auch wird gelehret, dass unser Herr Jesus Christus am jüngsten Tag kommen wird, zu richten, und alle Toten auferwecken, den Glaubigen und Auserwählten ewigs Leben und ewige Freude geben, die gottlosen Menschen aber und die Teufel in die Helle und ewig Straf verdammen.⁵

Luther's influence will here be noted since Melanchthon's words just cited are based on Luther's Bekenntnis 1528 where he opposes those who contend that the wicked and the devils "auch werden endlich zur Seligkeit kommen".⁶ Here the Schwabacher Artikel refers to the error of Origen and the Anabaptists.⁷ The terminology for the immortality implications includes expressions like "Glaubigen," "gottlosen Menschen," and Luther's "Frommen und Boosen," and the Schwabacher "Glaubigen, . . . Unglaubigen."

In addition to the Augsburg Confession the Lutheran Church has the Apology, known as "Apologia Confessionis Augustanae" which is also called "Apologia der Confession."⁸ The German translation adds "aus dem Latein verdeutcht durch Justum Jonam."

⁴Ibid., 37, 30-36.

⁵Ibid., 72, 1-9.

⁶Ibid., 72, Note 1.

⁷Ibid., 72, 19-31.

⁸Ibid., 139, The Title page.

Again, Luther's influence is noted in the fact that he was one of the reviewers of the Apology. His comment "an den Kurfuersten" is both interesting and helpful:

Ich hab M. Philipsen Apologia uberlesen: die gefaellet mir fast wohl und weisz nichts dran zu bessern noch aendern, wurde sich auch nicht schicken, denn ich go sanft und leise nicht treten kann. (WA Br V 319).⁹

In the Apology, Melancthon defends the Augsburg Confession, and shows clearly that it is in agreement with Scriptural position of the Church within the context of the relationship of the eternal salvation of men.

There is no specific mention of "soul" either in the Latin or in the German translation of the Augustana or the Apology. The eschatological implications, however, underlie the seriousness and purpose for which the Apology was written and adopted as a Confession of the Church. The very error of Purgatory, as well as other heresies, clearly involve the doctrine of the soul's continued existence. The errors are condemned on the basis of Scripture lest men come to eternal harm.

In this connection the papacy itself becomes involved with the adoption or an adaptation of the Platonic "earthly city" concept. Melancthon alludes to this in Article VII, "Von der Kirchen": "Derhalben der Pabst ein irdenischer Gott, ein ooberste Majestaet und allen der grossmaechtige Herr in aller Welt ist . . ."¹⁰ While "earthly city" implies an

⁹Ibid., "Einleitung," XVII, 7-9.

¹⁰Ibid., 240, 1ff. (cf. Latin, JABS, 238, 20ff.).

immortality it does not agree with the Scriptural and Christian connotation of the soul's future existence. Where Antichrist is drawn into the discussion, Melanchthon applies Thessalonians to describe the predictions of this error which rests upon the Platonic conception of an eternal "earthly city": "dasz antichristus soll sitzen im Tempel Gottes, herrschen und regieren in der Kirchen, Regiment und Amt drinne haben . . ."11

Because the Scriptures clearly speak of sin and death as in the passage: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,"12 Melanchthon stresses the seriousness of the soul's damnation. This is the wrong side for the soul in its continued existence. Melanchthon writes:

Da nennet er klar [Paul on the lust of sin] die boesen Lust eine Sunde . . . an ihr selbst ist es gleichwohl wahrlich ein Sunde des Todes und ewigen Verdamnis schueldig.13

With forgiveness of sins central for the eternal welfare of men Melanchthon stresses the "forward look" in the Sacraments. Christ crucified, risen, ascended and coming again are all involved in the Sacraments:

Das Sakrament ist von Christo eingesetzt, erschrockene Gewissen zu troesten, ihren Glauben zu staerken, wenn sie glaeben, dasz Christi Fleisch fuer der Welt Leben gegeben ist, und dasz wir durch die Speise mit Christo vereinigt werden, Gnad und Leben haben.14

11Ibid., 234, 25ff.

12Romans 6,23; cf. James 1,15.

13JABS, 155, 25.

14Ibid., 331, 24ff.

Darum ist auch recht christlich und not die Kinder zu taufen, damit sie des Evangelii, der Verheissung des Heils und der Gnaden teilhaftig werden, wie Christus befiehlt . . .¹⁵

On the actual Advent of Christ there was little controversy at the time the Confessions were written, although errorists deviated on certain points such as on the "when" and the "how". Melancthon mentions the following as an admonition to preparedness because of the serious dangers surrounding believers:

Den XVII Artikel nehmen die Widersacher an, da wir bekennen dasz Christus am juengsten Tage kommen werde, die Toten auferwecken, den Frommen das ewige Leben und Freude geben, die Gottlosen zu ewiger Pein mit dem Teufel verdammen.¹⁶

In concluding this study of the Apology it should be noted that Melancthon takes immortality of the soul to include the total person, as does Luther. From the references given to the Bekenntnisschriften it is evident that the terminology now includes "der ganze Mensch," e.g., "Suender," "erschrockene Gewissen," "Kinder," "die Toten," "den Frommen," "die Gottlosen." These terms are used with reference to the man as totus homo.

It will now be in order to investigate Melancthon's Tractatus De Potestate Et Primatus Pape. This writing should rightly follow Luther's Smalcald Articles, which were submitted to Jonas, Bugenhagen, Cruciger and Melancthon for review and constructive criticism before they were presented at the Council of Smalcald in February 1537. "Kurfuerst" Johann Friedrich called upon Luther to prepare the Smalcald declarations to

¹⁵ibid., 247, 24.

¹⁶ibid., 310, 45-50.

determine if the Wittenberg theologians were in agreement with Luther in opposing the error of the papacy. These declarations would also serve to clarify the Augsburg Confession; however, a second assignment was also handed out, namely, the addition of a "Zusatzartikel ueber das Papsttum." It was Melancthon who undertook the preparation of this "Zusatzartikel" giving it the title: Tractatus de Potestate et Primatu Papae, and had it ready by February 17, 1537.¹⁷ This "Zusatzartikel" emphatically exposes the life destroying errors of the papacy precisely because men are in jeopardy eternally.¹⁸

¹⁷Th. Kolde, Historische Einleitung in die Symbolischen Buecher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1907), p. XLIX.

¹⁸The student may wish to observe the following statements made by Melancthon: "dann sie nehmen Christo seine Ehre und verdammn die Seelen, darum soll man sie nicht ungestraft lassen hingehen," JABS, 486, 46-48. Laedunt enim gloriam Christi is an impressive statement; and this always undermines individual salvation, reaching out to undermine the corporate salvation of the believers in Christ. To support this implication that the future existence of the soul is involved in and with Christ see Melancthon's refutation of the primacy of the pope based on Joh. 18,26: "Nun ist es je an Tag, das Christus nicht dazu gesandt ist, dass Er das Schwert sollte fuehren oder auf weltliche Weise regieren, wie Er denn selbst sagt: Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt," JABS, 481, 9-13. Since the pope exercises a two-fold tyranny, defending his errors by force, even murder, and forbids judicial examination which ends up with losses in numbers of immortal souls, his entire rule destroys: "... et multis saeculis infinitas animas perdunt," JABS, 487, 18-19. Cf. "... et ad faciendas caede sanctorum [und die frommen Christen so jaemmerlich ermordet wuerden]," Ibid., 489, 14-15. See also: "Zum andern, dass er sich der Gewalt anmaszt zu binden und entbinden nicht allein in diesem zeitlichen Leben hie, sondern auch in jenem Leben [sed etiam sumit sibi ius de animabus post hanc vitam]," Ibid., 485, 9-12. Latin: Ibid., 484, 33-34. The Latin uses animabus here while the German uses a circumlocution implying the total person, "sondern auch in jenem Leben," without mentioning "der ganze Mensch." Note: Melancthon applies

The Tractate, then, as has been seen, clearly emphasizes man's relationship to God in Christ for his future welfare and seriously attempts to guide souls aright. The references above let the Tractate speak for itself and convey to us Melanchthon's theology on the subject of immortality. Insight is gained with reference to the times in which Melanchthon and the Wittenberg theologians lived, especially, in the light of the viciousness of the papacy with its soul-destroying errors which murder off countless numbers of believers. Always, the eternal welfare of the total person becomes the underlying emphasis and motivation, conjoined with the Scriptural doctrine of God's salvation in Christ. In this Christian light Melanchthon understood, and the Church with him, the Christian concept of the individual's continued existence.

Scriptural refutation, exhortation and warning so that souls do not come to harm in the future. "Und die Schrift schreiet mit aller Macht, dass solche Irrtuemer, des Teufels [doctrinam daemoniorum] und Antichrists Lehre seien," Ibid., 485, 45-47. The exhortations may be pin-pointed as follows: "Darumb sollen gottesforchtige Leut solche greuliche Irrtueme des Bapsts und sein Tyrannaci wohl bedenken und zum ersten wissen, dass solche Irrtueme zu fliehen und die rechten Lehr der Ehre Gottes und der Seelen Seligkeit halben anzunehmen sei," Ibid., 487, 34-38. "Die es aber mit dem Bapst halten und seine Lehr und falsche Gottesdienst verteidigen, die beflecken sich mit Abgotterei und gottslaesterlicher Lehre und laden auf sich alles Blut der frommen Christen, die der Bapst und die Seinen verfolgen, und die verhindern auch Gottes Ehr und der Kirchen Seligkeit, weil sie solch Irrtumb und Laster fur aller Welt und allen Nachkommen zu Schaden verteidigen," 489, 18-27. Indeed: . . . ja, man soll sich aus Not wider ihn als den rechten Antichrist setzen," 489, 2-3. Here the variant reading has: "Es ist notwendig, ihm als dem Antichrist entgegenzutreten." "Ino necesse est ei tanquam Antichristo adversari," 489, 2-3 footnote.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORMULA OF CONCORD, 1580

In this chapter it is proposed to follow generally, the intention of the writers who found it necessary to recapture the solid foundations set forth in the earlier Confessions. In fact, the Formula of Concord is a crystallization of confessional truth presented in the Confessions written before 1580 and a refutation of problems that arose since 1537. It is a Confession in its own right. The previous chapters have revealed the use of the concept, immortality of the soul, as presented in the Confessions. Here it will be well to observe the general eschatological content involving the immortality of the soul. The simple outline covering the following points should be adequate: Temporal Death; the Intermediate State of the Soul; the Second Coming of Christ; the Resurrection of the Dead; the Final Judgment; the End of the World; Eternal Damnation; Eternal Salvation; and several details which do not exactly fit into any of these categories.

It would be noted that the Reformers' interest in eschatology was a practical interest. For this reason, much of the eschatological thought in the Bekenntnisschriften is expressed only incidentally, virtually as something that is known and believed by all, with little or no argument or discussion. As a specific example of what is meant here, one may cite the very pronounced consciousness on the part of the Confessors that they and all men will have to give account before the

judgment-seat of Christ for their attitudes and conduct on this earth. This is everywhere assumed, and often mentioned in passing--but very little is said in a systematic way about the Second Coming of Christ, and the Final Judgment. Another example concerns the assumption of the writers of the Formula of Concord that they were living in the last times: "zu diesen letzten Zeiten der vergaenglichen Welt . . ."¹

With this brief introduction one may proceed to the various sections of the outline proposed:

I. Temporal Death--De Morte Temporalis.

In Article I of the Solid Declaration these words refer to the cause of a temporal death:

The punishment and penalty of original sin, which God has laid upon the children of Adam and upon original sin is death . . .²

Without questioning the fact of temporal death the Confessors simply stress the cause and include as subjects of this death, "the children of Adam." The next point in the outline points up the element of immortality.

II. The Intermediate State of the Soul--Status intermedius.

As has been seen, the Lutheran Confessions do not dogmatically describe or define the actual condition of the soul between death and the resurrection. To what has already been found, one may add that the language of the Confessions gives the impression that the soul, for all practical purposes,

¹JABS, 3, 13-14; 740, 5-6.

²Ibid., 849, 18-20. This chapter will quote JABS in an English translation by the writer, with help from the Concordia Triglotta.

is regarded as the personality of the individual.³ It is not necessary to bring in quotations on the status intermedius since the Formula of Concord fully accepts the earlier Confessions already treated in this thesis.

III. The Second Coming of Christ--De reditu Christi.⁴

IV. The Resurrection of the Dead--De resurrectione mortuorum.

There can be no doubt that the Lutheran Confessions teach, and teach very clearly, the physical resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Christ. All three of the Ecumenical Creeds reflect this in one way or another. In the Epitome, Article I on original sin (the Affirmative Part), it is clearly taught that in the resurrection of the body, original sin will be destroyed. The statement in its entirety is unusual, but the point is clear enough:

But original sin He has not created, assumed, redeemed, sanctified; nor will He raise it, will neither adorn nor save it in the elect, but in the resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.⁵

An excellent summary of the teaching of the Bekenntnisschriften on the subject of the resurrection of the body at the end of the world is found in the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord:

Fourthly, in the article of the Resurrection Scripture testifies that precisely the substance of this our flesh,

³Supra, p. 30ff.

⁴Infra, p. 56-57.

⁵JABS, 771, 35-772, 2.

but without sin, will rise again, and that in eternal life we shall have and retain precisely this soul, but without sin.⁶

V. The Final Judgment--De iudicio extremo.

It is of importance to recognize the fact that the Bekenntnisschriften do not regard the Final Judgment as an arbitrary act on the part of God. They explicitly state that God's will is that no one be lost, but that all should be saved. This is, of course, somewhat different from the position of the Calvinist Reformers. In the Solid Declaration, in the Second Article, this beautiful paragraph appears:

It is not God's will that anyone should be damned, but that all men should be converted unto Him and be saved eternally. Ezek. 33,11: As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. John 3,16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.⁷

While this chapter says little about the Second Coming of Christ, it comes into consideration at this point. The first matter which needs mentioning under the heading of the Final Judgment is the Judge. Under the heading of the Second Coming of Christ the purpose is this, that Christ is the One who will judge the quick and the dead at the end of the world, when He comes again in glory. Passages too numerous to list use the expression "before the judgment seat of Christ" or some variation of it. As has been seen, virtually the entire

⁶Ibid., 859, 7-12.

⁷Ibid., 891, 18-27.

Bekenntnisschriften seem to be written with that thought in mind--that the day is coming soon--when all men must face Christ as Judge. One example, from the Twelfth Article of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord, may be read by the student.⁸

With more specific reference to the subject of this thesis, it is now necessary to give attention to those who will be judged. There is no need to belabor the point, since it was accepted as a fact that all must be judged.

A new thought, somewhat vaguely expressed in Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession, is stated more clearly in the First Article of the Solid Declaration, where it is said that "man outside of Christ is a child of wrath and damnation."⁹ The Lutheran Confessions, then, teach that all men will be judged by Christ Himself, and that the judgment will be based on the conduct of the individual during his earthly pilgrimage; and, that the only means or basis for securing a verdict of "not guilty" is to be in Christ--among the elect of God.

VI. The End of the World--De consummatione mundi.

In an eschatological survey it is necessary to mention the Consummation of the World. By that, of course, is meant the climactic occurrence, when this present world-order ceases, and the new and eternal world-order begins. The Lutheran Confessions do not anywhere attempt to describe the end of the world, but it is everywhere assumed. The Formula of Concord

⁸Ibid., 827, 1-5.

⁹Ibid., 850, 25-28.

uses the term in the following manner, a number of times: "the great day of the Lord."¹⁰ Usually the term is used in connection with an eschatological urgency for the purpose of seeing to it that the believers be prepared, and that unbelievers be converted.

VII. Eternal Damnation--De damnatione aeterna.

Even though in other parts of the Bekenntnisschriften, a certain amount of figurative language is used in describing the punishments of hell, on the whole the language is quite simple and dignified. In fact, one might say that it is quite restrained. In Article IX of the Epitome the expression, "jaws of hell" is used descriptively.¹¹ Other expressions used are "everlasting fire" while in the Solid Declaration one finds "eternal misery," "tyranny and power of the devil."¹²

When it comes to the cause of eternal damnation, the Confessions have much to say.¹³ Those who fail to believe the true doctrine of the Gospel are, of course, called "unbelievers," and these are consigned to judgment. In the Epitome this is particularly emphasized, in connection with the unworthy participation in the Sacrament of the Altar.¹⁴ Here, unbelief and failure to repent are indicated as either synonymous or

¹⁰Ibid., 757, 15-19; 827, 1-5.

¹¹Ibid., 813, 27-28.

¹²Ibid., 849, 21-24.

¹³Supra, p. 56f.

¹⁴JABS, 796, 18-28; 799, 36-45; 800, 10-17.

concomitant, and these characteristics are said to be enough to make one in danger of judgment and condemnation.

The Solid Declaration also deals with original sin and teaches that it is a full and sufficient cause of eternal damnation as the following will show:

The punishment and penalty of original sin, which God has imposed upon the children of Adam and upon original sin, are death, eternal damnation, and also other bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal miseries, and the tyranny and dominion of the devil, so that human nature is subject to the kingdom of the devil. . . .¹⁵

In connection with this same Article I of the Solid Declaration, one may read the following words, which say virtually the same thing in a slightly different way: "We are by nature the children of wrath, death, and damnation, unless we are delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ."¹⁶ That leads one to what is throughout the firm conviction of all the Reformers--the teaching upon which they were ready to stake everything:

man without Christ must be a child of wrath and damnation, also in the dominion and beneath the power of Satan.¹⁷

It is for this reason that the writers of the Lutheran Confessions are so concerned about true preaching of the one and only pure Gospel of Christ. They insist that those who preach and teach lies will have to answer for the people that they have led astray.

¹⁵Ibid., 849, 18-25.

¹⁶Ibid., 847, 10-13.

¹⁷Ibid., 850, 25-28.

VIII. Eternal Salvation--De beatitudine aeterna.

The amazing thing here is that there should even be a doctrine of eternal life in the Christian sense. Even among the most benighted pagan people there is some idea of the immortality of the soul. But the idea of the eternal life of the entire personality--body and soul--and that in perfect bliss and glory, is something that could come only through revelation. The fact of eternal life, therefore, is a most surprising thing. Yet, it is a fact of which one may be completely certain, as the Lutheran Confessions everywhere assume and proclaim. Article III of the Epitome has a fine statement on this. In spite of all one's sins and shortcomings, one may be completely sure and certain of his salvation:

We believe, teach, and confess also that notwithstanding the fact that many weaknesses and defects cling to the true believers and truly regenerate, even to the grave, still they must not on that account doubt either their righteousness which has been imputed to them by faith, or the salvation of their souls, but must regard it as certain that for Christ's sake, according to the promise and word of the Holy Gospel, they have a gracious God.¹⁸

Quite in harmony with this truth, and indeed, underlying it, is the firm belief that eternal salvation is due entirely to the grace of God, who loves man in spite of all his sin and failure to measure up to the requirements of the Law, as this belief is set forth later on in Article III of the Solid Declaration:

We believe, teach, and confess that this faith is not a bare knowledge of the history of Christ, but such a gift of God by which we come to the right knowledge of Christ as our Redeemer in the Word of the Gospel, and trust in

¹⁸Ibid., 783, 34; 374, 7.

Him that for the sake of His obedience alone we have, by grace, the forgiveness of sins, are regarded as holy and righteous before God the Father, and eternally saved.¹⁹

It should be very instructive now, to turn to what the Confessions have to say about the nature of this eternal salvation for the benefit of the continued existence of soul and body. Again, one is impressed with the sober and restrained manner in which the Reformers deal with this all-important subject. At the same time one is impressed with the richness of their understanding of what is involved, as well as the beauty of their expression of this understanding. There is no crass expression relating to "pie in the sky by and by," and yet the whole concept is very real, and, one may say, extremely solid.

On the doctrine of election of souls, as a condition for being made a partaker of eternal life, many things could be said and drawn from the Bekenntnisschriften. In the Eleventh Article of the Epitome it is said:

"many are called and few chosen," Matt. 22, 14, does not mean that God is not willing to save everybody; but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but wilfully despise it, stop their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot perform His work in them, or, when they have heard it, make light of it again and do not heed it, for which not God or His election, but their wickedness, is responsible.²⁰

In all of this, one cannot escape the involvement of the continued existence of the soul as "der ganze Mensch." In

¹⁹Ibid., 783, 5-14.

²⁰Ibid., 819, 9-21.

concluding this chapter it will, then, be well to see what the Formula of Concord has to say with regard to the means by which the blessings of eternal life become ours. The preceding quotation alludes to the basic means when it says: "God's Word . . . the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost." In Article II of the Epitome this is said clearly and beautifully:

God, the Holy Ghost, however, does not effect conversion without means, but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word, as it is written Rom. 1:16: The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.²¹

A brief summary will bring this chapter to a conclusion: The Solid Declaration presents clearly, the cause of death for the children of Adam, thus endangering the blessed continued existence of the total person. In accepting the earlier Confessions the Formula of Concord reinforces them and follows the general and specific terminology. In the resurrection, original sin will be destroyed; precisely the substance of this our flesh, but without sin, will rise again; and that in eternal life we shall have and retain precisely this soul, but without sin. With regard to the final judgment, it is God's will that none be lost, yet all men must rise with their own bodies, and give account, and that man outside of Christ is a child of wrath and damnation. This will take place on "the great day of the Lord," at Christ's return. Hell is described as "eternal misery" and being under the "tyranny and power of the devil." Special emphasis is placed on the eschatological

²¹Ibid., 777, 31-36.

"Forward look" in the Sacraments, and unbelief or failure to believe and repent are enough to make one eat and drink damnation in partaking of the Lord's Supper. The idea of the eternal life of the entire personality in perfect bliss and glory is something that can come only through revelation. This is in contrast to the pagan concept of immortality of the soul. Bringing in the truth of the forgiveness of sins in Christ is also in contrast to the pagan concept. The doctrine of eternal election is clarified and the Gospel, by which the Holy Ghost calls sinners to faith and sanctifies them for eternal life, is emphatically stressed. Finally, the doctrine of the soul's future existence is clearly presented as being in harmony with all of the Confessions written before 1580.

They may enjoy the bliss and happiness of eternal salvation, rather than the damnation of eternal hell. Both aspects, the individual and the universal, belong to the adequate concept of eschatological thought, but it is only in Christian teaching that both receive due and proportionate recognition.

It has been found that the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are eschatological witnesses "bei dem Itzlichen und so auch das künftige Leben." In speaking of the immortality of the soul in these Confessions, it was found that it takes in the total concept of man, "der ganze Mensch," and the total concept of eternal life. The Lutheran Confessions, then, and the Holy Scriptures, do not know or speak of the concept of the

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This study on the immortality of the soul, in general, and the investigation of the use of this concept in the Lutheran Confessions, in particular, now permits clear conclusions. It can be definitely said, that "immortality" of the individual soul, as well as that of the race and the universe at-large deals with events like the resurrection and the general judgment. In these, according to Christian revelation, all men will participate, both the living and the dead. With the signs and portents in the moral and physical order that are to precede and accompany these events, men are alerted for preparedness so that they may enjoy the bliss and happiness of eternal salvation, rather than the damnation of eternal hell. Both aspects, the individual and the universal, belong to the adequate concept of eschatological thought, but it is only in Christian teaching that both receive due and proportionate recognition.

It has been found that the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are eschatological witnesses "bei den Itslebenden und so nach uns kommen werden."¹ In speaking of the immortality of the soul in these Confessions, it was found that it takes in the total concept of man, "der ganze Mensch," and the total concept of eternal life. The Lutheran Confessions, then, and the Holy Scriptures, do not know or speak of the concept of the

¹JABS, SD XII, 40; AC 9, 26; FC 740,5.

immortality of the soul as a "Ding an sich."

In investigating the concept, it was found that "immortality of the soul" is a Greek concept and derives from rationalism. It is so recognized in general works of reference, reading as follows: "Reduzierte der Rationalismus die Eschatologie auf die Unsterblichkeit der Seele."² This has set up the contrast between what is the pagan, and what is the Christian connotation on the subject. It can now readily be seen that the eschatological concept of the resurrection of all flesh, relating to the continued existence of the soul and bringing both body and soul into union again after separation by death, is something for which the unbeliever can find no support either in nature or the refinements of his own reason. From the Lutheran Confessions it has been seen, that, for the Christian the Scriptural assurance is given that from the Atonement through Christ it follows that all men shall rise for the judgment. The re-made bodies in the resurrection will be reunited with the souls that were theirs in their temporal life. Accordingly, in the resurrection, the bodies of all men will be made immortal and unchangeable and joined with their immortal souls. The total personality of the believers in Christ will be glorified and glorious forever. The total personality of those who do not believe in Christ, will live in eternal misery. It has been seen that after the resurrection the complete body plus soul of man will never die again.

²Meyers Konversations Lexicon, VI, p. 99.

It is hoped that a successful clarification of the subject has here been accomplished. It has been found that, when adapting the concept of the soul's immortality for Christian use, the Confessions have always put it into the Christian context lest it be mistaken for something Greek and humanistic or pagan. The Confessions emphasize the important differences between a pagan hope for the immortality of the soul and the Christian's faith in the resurrection of the body going so far as to say that Christian faith knows nothing of an immortality of the man.³ For that would mean a denial of death not recognizing it as a judgment of God, but only an awakening from a real death through the power of God. There is existence after death only by way of awakening or resurrection. While the body lies in death, the disembodied soul enjoys rest in the hand of God, while that of the unbeliever awaits the judgment and eternal misery.

While the Confessions are not known to speculate, they give evidence that their writers have searched the Scriptures to find the answers to the questions about the existence and the activity of the disembodied soul. The main question, relative to the state of the believer's soul after death, has been answered in Scriptural assurances as exemplified in Paul's conviction:

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

³Supra, p. 30, 39, 41f. and 47.

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁴

Death does not separate from the love of God. A gracious God does not omit removal from the earth for His saints, but promises to retain them in fellowship with Himself away from the earth.

From the findings in this thesis it becomes apparent that it is almost futile to try to operate in Lutheran theology with the concept of the "immortality of the soul" per se. The status intermedius is capable of no satisfactory definition or description even from Scripture. Neither the Confessions nor Scripture teach an unqualified "immortality of the soul." Since each chapter has a more detailed summarization, the general conclusions presented in this concluding chapter should be adequate.

⁴Romans 8:38.39.

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